The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXXXIV NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 1932 No. 3470

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Subscription Rates: Five dollars per annum postpaid in the United States and Mexico; to Canada, $6.50; and to foreign countries of the Postal Union, $6.00.

THE NATION, No. 20 Vesey Street, New York City, Cable Address: Nation, New York. British Agent of Subscriptions and Advertising, Miss Gertrude M. Cross, 23 Brunswick Square, London W. C. 1, England.

THE WAR-DEBT MORATORIUM declared last June has been finally legalized by Congress. The Senate, following the favorable vote in the House, has recognized what was an accomplished fact. It had no alternative. By refusing to approve the moratorium it would not only have been disciplining President Hoover, but it might very easily have been wrecking Europe in the process. While we rejoice that the moratorium has at last been made legally as well as morally binding, we are thoroughly alarmed by the ugly, jingoistic attitude the Senate revealed in the course of its debate. We refer here not alone to the bitter speeches of Senator Johnson, which were of a sort to stir up hatred for Europe among the American people. The Senate as a whole was hardly less hostile. It refused to override the House reservation declaring against further interference with the debt agreements. It voted down, by 63 to 16 in each case, two amendments offered by Senator Howell of Nebraska and supported generally by the Progressives. Stated briefly, the amendments would have declared it the opinion of Congress that there should be no further adjustments of war debts until Europe had agreed to revise the peace treaties. On the whole the Senate showed itself wholly indifferent to the desperate plight of Europe.

ANY INCREASE made in federal tax rates should be applied to 1931 incomes so that the government can begin collecting the anticipated additional revenue in March of this year. The government cannot afford to wait until March, 1933. It needs to benefit by the contemplated tax adjustment at the earliest possible moment in order to meet the constantly growing deficit. The Democrats in Congress are opposed to this obvious necessity. Representative Rainey of Illinois, the Democratic floor leader, considers it regrettable that "the taxpayers of the country are to be subjected now to new and staggering burdens of taxation." It is regrettable, of course, but under the circumstances it is also unavoidable. Representative Rainey would soften the blow by postponing the new tax rates until 1933, that is, until after the Presidential election. He presumably fears that the country will hold the Democrats, who control the House, responsible for the increased taxes, and that this will react against the Democratic candidates in November. And meanwhile he appears willing to let the government worry along with its financial difficulties as best it can without availing itself of its privilege to obtain prompt relief through its taxing power. Here Representative Snell of New York, the Republican leader, is on more sensible ground when he declares that the government "will absolutely need the money in 1932."

IN THE PROHIBITIVE TARIFF just established by Spain, and deliberately aimed at the United States, we have the clearest measure yet afforded of the mischief done by the Hawley-Smoot law to our business and the comity of the world. We exported $82,000,000 worth of our products to Spain in 1929 and $57,500,000 in 1930. Now, in our time of distress, Spain retaliates for our high tariff by barring fourteen classes of imports, in ten of which, notably automobiles and telephone equipment, the United States is especially interested. This will not, of course, in the slightest degree affect the belief of Senator Smoot and Senator Watson that our latest tariff is the cornerstone of our industrial system, nor will it induce the President to recede from the position taken by him in his annual message to Congress that this is not the time for an overhauling of the tariff. On the contrary, there is talk in Washington of invoking the retaliatory provisions of the tariff, which, if it were done, would provide us with a first-class tariff war. All of which shows clearly how tariffs menace the peace of the world. Was there ever anything more insane than the conduct of both sides? When every country is suffering for lack of business, when industry after industry is prostrate—then, according to our realistic statesmen, is just the time to make it impossible to trade with your neighbor who wants to do business with you!

IMPRISONED within their boundaries—this is now the lot of the Austrian people. The government has achieved this by the simple device of refusing to sell railway tickets to would-be purchasers unless they can show that they possess sufficient currency to go abroad, and then for-

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bidding the banks to sell to anybody more than the equivalent of seven dollars of such currency. A few exceptions are to be made—for example, with certain limitations, for journalists and commercial travelers; but hereafter in general no one wishing to visit friends or relatives or to seek health abroad can do so. It is explained that this is a desperate measure due to the desperate situation of Austria and the necessity of keeping within its boundaries every penny of its resources. It is an effort like that of Spain with its prohibitive tariff to make the nation "self-contained." The next step for these countries is to forbid the entrance of foreigners altogether, and then with all their people within their own frontiers they can do each other's washing and live happily forever after. That the Austrian financial situation is beyond description menacing is plain, especially as the promised French loan is not forthcoming. From Hungary, another danger spot, comes the news that it has virtually declared bankruptcy by postponing all payments on foreign debts for one year. As our investments in Hungary total $179,000,000, private American investors, according to the State Department, will lose, as a result, between $12,000,000 and $14,000,000 in the coming year.

THE POLISH TERROR in Eastern Galicia continues unabated. Writing from Lemberg, a correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* says:

> The oppression of the Ukrainian minority in Poland is growing worse every day. It would perhaps be wearisome to record the oppressive acts that are being committed in ever-growing numbers. . . . But there are certain things that cannot be left unrecorded, that must be heard by the civilized world—namely, the horrible and inhuman barbarities that are inflicted on Ukrainian political prisoners in Polish jails, and which are part of the war waged by the Polish dictatorship against the Ukrainian minority.

The correspondent then goes on to present numerous facts, gathered from eyewitnesses, to support these sensational charges. After many unsuccessful efforts the leaders of the Ukrainian minority finally managed to set their case before the League of Nations. The Assembly appointed a committee of three to investigate the reign of terror in Eastern Galicia. This committee was to have reported at the last session of the Assembly in September, but an unforeseen complication replete with irony prevented the report from being prepared. Kenkichi Yoshizawa, the Japanese delegate in the Assembly, had been chosen *rapporteur* of the committee, but he was too busy defending Japanese aggression in Manchuria to have any time left for the Ukrainian victims of the Polish terror! The question was put over until January.

EVERY DAY brings a more critical situation in India—critical for Mahatma Gandhi, who returned to face a task infinitely complicated by recent events, and critical for Great Britain, whose resort to extreme measures of repression in Bengal has only provoked deeper hostility. Jawaharlal Nehru already has been thrown into prison for his activities in the strikingly effective no-rent campaign; British officials, understandably resentful over the occasional cold-blooded assassinations of their fellows, are themselves casting off restraint and are thus increasing the desperation of the natives; the attempt to impose an unsatisfactory constitution promises a series of brutal black-and-tan episodes; and it seems altogether likely that Gandhi before long will again be lodged behind the bars. As during his last imprisonment, he would doubtless be an inspiring symbol of unity; but the old policy of "divide and rule" bids fair to aid the British purpose. The desertion of the National Congress program by the All-India Moslem League cannot be regarded, unfortunately, as a wholly ingenuous move; Moslem delegates at London, before their departure, held a love feast with the reactionary Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, and have been used, wittingly or unwittingly, by the Tories to brake the radical momentum of the Congress. The strength of Gandhi among the Moslem masses, however, must not be underestimated; and the undiminished zeal of the rank-and-file Indians, in the face of imprisonment and beatings, is a portent with which the British will have to reckon.

THE MINERS IN HARLAN and Bell counties in Kentucky have been called out on strike by the National Miners Union. We are not sure what this left-wing organization hopes to gain by this maneuver. Certainly conditions are not ripe now for a successful strike, though it cannot be denied that the underpaid and underfed pit workers of Kentucky have much to fight for. Living conditions among these people are considerably worse than the deplorable conditions found in the Pennsylvania and Ohio coal areas. Kentucky, together with Tennessee and West Virginia, has long been a stronghold of anti-unionism, and in consequence the wages paid there have always been low. Meanwhile the civil warfare in Harlan County continues unabated. A deputy sheriff was fatally wounded on Christmas Eve, his death being the ninth of its kind since the labor troubles began a year ago. The shooting occurred just a few days before the opening of the latest of the series of murder trials growing out of these disturbances. More than thirty miners, including the president of the Evarts local of the United Mine Workers, are being tried, or are about to be tried, for the death of four men at Evarts last spring. It is into this atmosphere that the leaders of the National Miners Union have plunged with their call for a strike.

THE "RED SQUAD" of the Los Angeles police department has finally run into trouble. For months this group of picked policemen has been breaking up meetings of radicals and liberals, beating up workers and sympathizers, and applying third-degree methods to persons arrested. Lately the "red squad" overreached itself in stopping a mass-meeting of liberals called to arouse sympathy for Tom Mooney and the Kentucky miners. Night-sticks, blackjacks, and tear-bombs were generously used in driving from the hall the five thousand men and women who had assembled. The reaction of the "better element" of Los Angeles was, from the standpoint of the police, rather surprising. The bar association, the Municipal League, and several religious organizations addressed a protest to Mayor John C. Porter. He promptly replied that "this communication is apparently from individuals who seem to be defending an organization that preaches the overthrow of our government, and I see no reason why I should recognize these demands." But he modified his attitude when the City Council by a vote of 11

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to 4 roundly condemned the terroristic tactics of the police. A compromise was reached after a conference between the mayor, police department, and various city officials whereby it was agreed that the "red squad" should refrain from breaking up meetings until an "overt act" had been committed. But it was left to the police to define for themselves what might constitute an "overt act."

A GREAT VICTORY has been won for free speech in Detroit, where an antediluvian member of the Board of Education, Dr. B. J. Shurly, undertook to dismiss from his position in the Teachers College Dr. Walter G. Bergman for the crime of sedition, specifically for daring to criticize the Reserve Officers Training Corps in schools and colleges. Dr. Bergman happens to have been a veteran who served in France, and he is commander of the Thomas Jefferson Post of the American Legion. That did not prevent Dr. Shurly's attack, although the offending utterance was not even made in a classroom, but at a meeting of members of the League for Industrial Democracy. The result of Dr. Shurly's action is a vindication of the right of the Detroit school teacher to have opinions of his own and to express them, as guaranteed by the Constitution. At a meeting on December 8 the Board of Education passed a resolution guaranteeing free speech to teachers outside of the classroom "upon all subjects, including social, economic, and political questions, without fear of official reprimand or coercion on the part of anyone connected with the Board of Education." Dr. Shurly voted for this in order to move a reconsideration. It did him no good. On December 22 the board voted by 4 to 3 not to reconsider the resolution. At the same meeting there was a magnificent debate for two hours on disarmament, free speech, the Pact of Paris, sedition, birth control, free love, trade unionism, and other subjects, which must have been well worth a high price of admission and might even have been enlightening to Dr. Shurly.

IT IS PLEASANT to record that President Hoover has recognized the stake that women have in the disarmament of the world by appointing President Mary E. Woolley of Mt. Holyoke College to the disarmament commission. The precedent thus established is of such far-reaching importance that we are not disposed to cavil today at his selection of a woman who belongs to the conservative wing of the peace movement instead of the militant. We are, indeed, the more grateful because of the sad fact that Ambassador Dawes has now been chosen to head the delegation, Henry P. Fletcher having fortunately decided not to serve. When will President Hoover learn how personally unpopular and ineffective Ambassador Dawes is in Europe wherever he goes because of his extraordinarily bad manners? In this case the selection is all the more regrettable because, as the New York *Times* has pointed out, the other countries involved, notably England and Germany, are sending their highest-rank statesmen — England Premier MacDonald, and Germany its Chancellor. The failure to add Mr. Stimson to the commission handicaps it from the very start. It is further weighted down by the appointment of the big-navy and imperialistic Senator Swanson of Virginia, alongside of whom is to serve some Republican Senator, probably of the conventional type, while the fifth member is to be Hugh Gibson, who has failed so signally in previous conferences.

Japan the Outlaw

THAT is what Japan is today—an outlaw nation. In the face of increasing evidence that the leading countries of the world are entirely opposed to its war in Manchuria, Japan steadily goes ahead completing its conquest. Borrowing a leaf out of the imperialistic books of England, and of the United States in Nicaragua and elsewhere, it describes the Chinese troops as "bandits" and proposes to "clean them up." More than that, its government continues to insist that all criticisms of its actions are merely preventing the early coming of peace by misleading the Chinese into resisting—a clever, much too clever, move against the natural outburst of world indignation. Meanwhile Japan, with militarists in complete control of the government, continues to reinforce its armies; to advance; to organize a government of its own for Manchuria; and to violate freely the Nine-Power Treaty, the Covenant of the League of Nations, and the Kellogg Pact.

In other words, Japan is running amuck in the family of nations. "What are you going to do about it?" is the question it poses to the Powers. What, indeed? No more important query has been put to the League and to the United States since the World War. If the League sits by irresolute while the war goes on, it will sustain a blow to its prestige from which it may never recover. It may, of course, continue to hide behind the subterfuge that there is no war in Manchuria, but everyone recognizes the subterfuge and knows that Article 16 of the Covenant of the League clearly applies. This reads that in the event of an act of war by any member

> . . . it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the League, which hereby undertakes immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade and financial relations . . . the prohibition of all financial, personal, or commercial intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking state and the nationals of any other state, whether a member of the League or not.

If the League cannot act under this article, it would certainly not be able to act if France in the next few months should decide to war upon Germany and again invade that country; there will be few future cases in which offending nations will not be in a position to point to this precedent in the case of Manchuria and to thumb their noses at the League.

As for ourselves, we are firmly of the opinion that there ought to be a direct expression by our government of the indignation the American people feel at treaty violation as unblushing and shameless as Germany's violation of its treaty with Belgium in 1914. Washington should publish at once the entire correspondence between this country and Japan, and in our judgment should devote itself to organizing an effective international protest—we would wish that we might, in common with other nations, withdraw our Ambassador from Tokio, precisely as the Italian government once withdrew its Ambassador from Washington in protest against the lynching of its nationals in New Orleans. Our government owes it to itself to leave no stone unturned to vindicate the violated treaties and to express its complete disapprobation of this act of indefensible aggression.

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The Challenge of 1932

THE dark year of 1931 has passed into history, a year for the United States of suffering, bitterness, and increasing disillusionment. It is bad enough for a country to tumble overnight from the greatest height of prosperity ever attained; but it is worse for it to discover that it is without statesmen to guide it, that its leadership in finance, commerce, and politics is bankrupt, and that no clear-cut program is offered as the ladder on which to climb out of the pit of blackness into the sunlight of peace, comfort, and satisfactory living for all. We thought ourselves a race of supermen with prosperity our vassal for all time. We looked with contempt upon the effete nations of Europe. Had we not just shown them how to win the World War and done it in the briefest time, and were we not showing them the ideal way of life? We had read with mingled distrust and incredulity of what they had told us as to their suffering and economic misery—only to find that suffering and misery could walk in upon us in the twinkling of an eye; and we are still in the stage of incredulous amazement that this has come to us.

Yet there are some positive gains to be recorded. We have thus far shown astonishing self-control. The most lawless country in the world has not witnessed a single bread riot of importance; it has not been necessary in a single case to call out the troops as during the panic of 1877. While *The Nation,* as our readers are aware, believes that there must be federal aid to tide the unemployed over the crisis, it recognizes with satisfaction and gratitude the generous private response to the calls for aid—more generous than would be found in any other country, even though all the sufferers have by no means been reached. We give thanks, too, that the economic disaster which confronts us has made men and women ***think,*** **has made multitudes realize** that our institutions are not perfect, that there is something radically wrong with the situation under which, even at the height of prosperity, many are on the ragged edge of starvation while others literally roll in wealth.

That this thinking has not yet taken definite shape or concentrated upon any given reforms is true. But the fact that public opinion is not yet organized, that the necessary leadership is still lacking, constitutes the greatest challenge of 1932. We have far to go in making over our processes of government and we shall have to face the blind and bitter opposition of many who do not realize that the prevailing system has broken down, that the doctrine of rugged individualism is today a joke, that the kind of leadership we have had leads only to despair. They are the ones who refused to heed the warning that the period of standing still in our political and economic thought during the reign of Calvin Coolidge, which they applauded because it left them free to go their way to their heart's content, was really a grave period of retrogression. They are the ones who still indulge in talk of the largest navy in the world, who desire an imperialistic government, who daily sanction the violations of the fundamental guaranties of the Constitution, who wish to lock up or shoot anybody whose opinions and vision differ from theirs. We shall find as the depression gets more intense that we have fascists without number who can persuade themselves that fascism is really 100 per cent Americanism and quite justified in the defense of our institutions and our Constitution. They are the ones who will not give up their special privileges, their favored position, without determined effort to crush any opposition.

Now if that opposition comes to pass (William G. McAdoo, on his return to California from a trip to the East, reports that he is astonished at the "evidences of an amazing amount of unrest and discontent under the crust," and that he found "a desperate feeling among the people" that they are dominated by utterly selfish and unworthy political parties) it will be dangerous, indeed, if it is not formulated, organized, and led along liberal lines. Here again is the challenge for the coming year. To all who believe in liberalism it is an extraordinary opportunity to show to their fellow-citizens that there are ways out, that there is no need for despair if only they will direct themselves to the removal of the obvious obstacles to economic rehabilitation, and then to the consideration of reforms. The tariff is the enemy, as are the debts and reparations, the piling up of gold, the buying of elections by campaign funds, the intolerable misuse of the Presidential powers to renominate the sitting President, and all the other barriers to the full, clear, and free expression of the popular will. The foes are still the possessors of special privilege. It remains as true as when Woodrow Wilson used those words in 1912 that "our government has been for the past few years under the control of heads of great allied corporations with special interests," that "the government of the United States in recent years has not been administered by the common people of the United States" but by "this little group or that little group. . . . An invisible empire has been set up above the forms of democracy." Words which were echoed by Theodore Roosevelt when he said July 27, 1912: "This crooked control of both the old parties by the beneficiaries of political and business privilege renders it hopeless to expect any far-reaching and fundamental service from either." No one will maintain that this control has been overthrown, that it is a whit less menacing than when those two men railed against it.

We are well aware that the citizens of the United States are going to be profoundly concerned with their own affairs during the next twelve months; they will be trying to keep their families in clothing and food, to avoid the foreclosure of the mortgages on their homes. Yet we believe that in increasing numbers as the political campaign draws near and then takes its course, the multitudes will find time to think of national affairs as well as of their own immediate concerns. And if a spur is needed, it will be found in every large community in the country and in many of the rural districts, in the sight of many American men, women, and children on the verge of starvation through no fault of their own. We believe the Republic to be in jeopardy, but we have not lost faith that it can be rescued and set upon the right paths through the instrumentality of the present form of government, adequately altered to meet the needs of the situation.

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End of the Young Plan

WHEN one considers the restrictions with which the Young Plan advisory committee was hedged about, the immensely relevant and important questions that it was technically prohibited from considering, the outspokenness of its report is remarkable, and is perhaps directly responsible for the crucial decision of the French and British governments to call a conference to reconsider the entire question of debts and reparations. The committee left little doubt regarding its real opinion. It concluded that "the burden of taxation in Germany has become so high that there is no margin for further increase." The unparalleled steps taken to maintain the currency and the budget show "a resolute desire on the part of the German government to meet the situation." The committee was practically forbidden by the terms of its instructions to consider the "unconditional" annuities, but declares in unmistakable terms that in spite of its efforts Germany "will not be able in the year beginning in July next to transfer the conditional part of her annuity." The committee goes on to declare that it would not consider that it had fully accomplished its task if it did not draw the attention of the governments concerned to "the unprecedented gravity of the crisis, the magnitude of which undoubtedly exceeds the 'relatively short depression' envisaged in the Young Plan," which contemplated a steady expansion in world trade, both in volume and in value. The present committee points out that the opposite of this has occurred. The burden on Germany is consequently very much greater even than the Young Plan itself originally contemplated, for not only has the trade of the world shrunk in value, but the violent fall in gold prices has added greatly to the real burden of all payments fixed in gold. The German problem, says the report finally, "is largely responsible for the growing financial paralysis of the world," and it ends with an appeal to the governments "to permit no delay in dealing with this great crisis."

Here is the conclusion of a body of economic experts with representatives from both neutral countries and Germany's principal creditors—from Switzerland, Japan, Jugoslavia, Sweden, Holland, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, the United States, and France. They have once for all disposed of the myth that Germany is "faking," or "staging" a crisis, that she has made no real effort to pay, that she could pay if she were willing to. They have not only said that Germany's "conditional" payments cannot be met, but everything in their report implies beyond question that the "unconditional" payments cannot be met either. They have virtually said, in brief, in the teeth of the most stubborn French opposition, and with the French representative even agreeing, that the Young Plan is at an end.

What is perhaps even more astonishing than the report itself is the immediate action of the French government in agreeing with the British government to call a conference at The Hague on January 18 to reconsider the whole question of debts and reparations. This seems to mean—and if it does it is immensely encouraging news—that the French are at last ready to recognize realities and abandon the Young Plan. But it means also that France and Britain, in return for a further postponement and probable scaling down of the reparations, will demand from the United States a further postponement and scaling down of their debt to us. They have reached a temper where they seem to accept at face value Mr. Hoover's statement that we will take no lead in the matter. They evidently will have not the slightest hesitation in announcing that they will take advantage of the clause in their agreement with us which permits them to forgo payments on the debt for a period of two years. More grave than that, responsible opinion in both France and Britain has reached a point where it is seriously considering downright repudiation if our Congress does not alter its uncompromising attitude. Sir Arthur Salter probably sums up this point of view in his remark that "Congress has done its best to exempt default from dishonor." If the debts should be repudiated, it would not only mean that the United States would get nothing—that would be unimportant compared with the shock to world confidence, the economic disorganization, and the international bitterness and recrimination that would follow. By its tragic blindness to the situation, by the appalling stupidity of its recent declaration that it is "against the policy of Congress that any of the indebtedness of foreign countries to the United States should be in any manner canceled or reduced," Congress has succeeded in uniting Europe against America, in making the United States, and not France, the chief barrier to any recovery from the world economic crisis.

Money and Elections

HUGE expenditures go hand in hand with election of public officials in the United States. This has been pointed out before; it needs to be discussed again and again. Critics have long sneered at democracy as being, or so they contend, simply a stupid counting of noses. In truth, democracy in this country has become hardly more than a mere counting of dollars. Every Presidential election since 1896, with one exception, that of 1916, has been won by the party that has spent the most money. Congressional, State, and local elections have with equal constancy gone the same way. Moreover, campaign expenditures have invariably been larger, in most cases much larger, than the salaries of the officials to be elected. In 1930, for example, a minimum of $5,505,712 was spent to nominate and elect thirty-two Senators, a sum fifteen times greater than the combined salaries of the Senators who were elected. This fact has just been brought out by the Senate investigating committee, of which Gerald P. Nye is chairman, in a report that strongly censures the present excessive use of money in campaigns, and that at the same time proposes certain remedies.

The Corrupt Practices Act of 1925 was designed to check corruption in Presidential and Congressional elections by requiring candidates or their managers to make known to Congress the sources of all contributions to their campaign funds, and the exact amounts and purposes of their campaign expenditures. The Nye committee has come to the conclusion that this law is defective in several major respects. It has proposed that the 1925 act be remedied by placing definite maximum limits on expenditures, by extending the provisions of the law to cover primary elections, by providing that

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reports of contributions and expenditures now made to Congress be given wide publicity through the clerks of the various federal district courts, and by concentrating responsibility for all expenditures made in his behalf on the candidate himself or his publicly authorized agents. Individuals or organizations who collect or distribute funds on behalf of a candidate without his explicit authorization would be subjected to severe penalties. Under a bill introduced by Chairman Nye, in which these projected reforms are incorporated, expenditures for the nomination of a Presidential candidate would be limited to $250,000; for the election of a President and a Vice-President, $5,000,000; for the nomination and election of a Senator, $50,000; for the nomination and election of a Representative, $10,000.

The Nye bill merits the immediate consideration of Congress, although many of its provisions are plainly quite impracticable. Publicity for campaign expenditures is essential. So is the provision for fixing responsibility for contributions and expenditures upon individual candidates or their agents. Most important, however, is the proposal to place a definite limitation upon expenditures, and this reform should be enacted without fail. We cannot agree to the precise limitations laid down in the Nye bill. For example, $5,000,000 appears to be an extravagant sum to allow any party to spend on the election of a President. Again, it would be unfair to permit a party in Nevada, which has a population of less than 100,000, to expend $50,000 in electing a Senator, while a party in New York State, with its population of 12,000,000, is held to the same sum. But we can hope that these inequalities will be removed before the Nye bill is finally acted upon.

While we wish to see this measure enacted because it is actually a step forward, we nevertheless wonder if it goes far enough. One factor that has escaped the Nye committee is that under its projected reforms national politics would still be a rich man's game. Wealth would continue to control the two major parties. A new minority or labor party would be placed under an immense handicap unless it could from its own ranks raise sufficient funds to compete with the usually handsome contributions wealthy industrialists and bankers make to the major parties. In *The Nation* of February 4, 1931, we suggested that by simplifying our election system we could make the maintenance of a permanent party organization less expensive and less necessary. We also recalled the proposal made to the New York State Legislature and other bodies "that the government bear all the election and campaign expenses. Under this system the State would print pamphlets for all the candidates of whatever party, giving each candidate for the same office the same amount of space. No other publicity or advertising would be permitted except over the radio and perhaps from public platforms. Radio time, however, would be divided equally among the various candidates in accordance with the prominence or importance of the office being sought." This proposal would have the merit of putting all parties on an equal basis and it would greatly reduce the dependence of political parties upon wealthy individuals for financial support. Until we can make the parties as nearly as possible independent of such contributions, our party organizations will continue to be dominated and our elections to be influenced by individuals and organizations whose motives are purely personal or selfish.

A Note on Prosperity

IT is treasonable, of course, but there are moments when optimism turns our stomach and when, out of pure perversity, we look on the dark side of things. To the mechanically smiling prophets of prosperity by bluff we reply with a hollow sigh, and if we met Mr. Hoover himself we should say in Shakespeare's own words: "For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of kings."

In such moments as these it is our dearest pleasure to imagine what a steady unbroken decline would be like, and we find the game almost as thrilling as reading the most catastrophic pages of Gibbon himself. We begin with a thought of the Empire State Building, which now reaches its proud but empty shaft into a smiling, implacable sky, and from that we try to go on to picture to ourself a whole city hopelessly too big for its dwindling needs—to imagine Fifth Avenue lined with abandoned shops and a subway no longer crowded but reaching out into regions which have become deserted villages at last. "I can remember," the oldest inhabitant will remark, "when Central Park was in the middle of the city and when Forty-second Street was considered downtown."

We have, after all, had no experience whatever with this sort of thing. We have known only an expanding world, and we have got used to taking it for granted that each successive year would find the mechanics of life better than they were the year before. Everything gets bigger and better as a matter of course. When we move into a new apartment it is more convenient than the one we left; when we buy a new car it is faster and easier to drive than the old one we discarded. But things can go down hill as well as up and there have been nations which have got used to a gradual simplification of life; which have seen great buildings, not torn down to make room for greater ones, but gradually abandoned one after another; which have frankly recognized the impossibility of maintaining the machinery which their forefathers had set up. The aqueducts of Rome were never rebuilt after Belisarius destroyed them and from that day forward most Romans went unbathed. Can we imagine similar catastrophes overtaking us and can we imagine ourselves in a similar frame of mind? Can we imagine taking it for granted that when our electric refrigerator breaks down we shall have to go back to an icebox, that the road over which we drive will not be repaired but will get worse and worse until it is impassable at last? Can we imagine horse-drawn vehicles gradually replacing taxicabs and a day when the Bronx subway will cease to run because it has no passengers?

Such things are not—as we like to remind ourselves when we read certain utterances of certain public men—historically impossible. And in order still further to stimulate our readers into that optimistic reaction which this gloomy vision will undoubtedly provoke, we must cite the observation attributed to John Maynard Keynes. After all, he is said to have said, there is no natural or inevitable period of time during which a depression can last, although the longest one known to history is that which occurred during the Middle Ages. It lasted 800 years.

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The Nation's Honor Roll for 1931

FOR the sixth time, as its roll of merit for the year just passed, *The Nation* presents a list, by no means a final one, of American men and women who have, by public service, contributions to art or science, or additions to the gaiety of nations, deserved in some measure the thanks of their fellow-citizens.

Public Service

ALANSON B. HOUGHTON, former Ambassador to Great Britain and to Germany, for his constructive courage in urging statesman-like policies of peace.

ROBERT M. LA FOLLETTE, Senator from Wisconsin, for his exceptional record in Congress, and especially for his efforts on behalf of the unemployed.

The WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM, for organizing and conducting the transcontinental peace caravan, and DOROTHY DETZER, its secretary in Washington, for the remarkable day-by-day devotion and ability with which she has directed the executive work of this organization.

The COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND OBSERVANCE, otherwise known as the WICKERSHAM COMMISSION, for its informative reports in which were revealed and denounced the brutal treatment accorded minors in prisons, the general viciousness and many shortcomings of our prison system, and the lawlessness of public officials.

The SOUTHERN COMMISSION FOR THE STUDY OF LYNCHING, for its careful investigation of and its thoughful and highly useful report on America's worst national crime.

MAYOR JAMES J. WALKER of New York, FRANK P. WALSH, AARON SAPIRO, GOVERNOR FLOYD OLSON of Minnesota, and every other public-spirited American who has taken part in the long and so far unsuccessful fight to secure a pardon for Thomas J. Mooney, fifteen years a prisoner in a California penitentiary.

PHILIP F. LA FOLLETTE, Governor of Wisconsin, for his constructive and provocative address to the State legislature on the economic crisis.

GEORGE W. MAXEY, Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, for his courageous dissenting opinion in the case of the Kraemer Hosiery Company vs. Louis F. Budenz, in which he held that labor organizers no less than other Americans are entitled to enjoy the right of free speech.

Journalism

LOUIS F. STARK, for his sympathetic and comprehensive report on the pitiful living conditions among the Kentucky miners, and the NEW YORK *Times* for publishing his articles.

H. L. MENCKEN, for writing, and the BALTIMORE *Sun* for publishing, an article denouncing the Salisbury lynchers, a fearless and effective polemic written in the face of threats by Salisbury business men to withdraw their business from Baltimore.

The BUFFALO *Evening News,* for its admirable work in improving conditions that amounted virtually to peonage in the employment and housing of laborers on State public works.

Books and Plays

EUGENE O'NEILL, for "Mourning Becomes Electra," a tragedy which is not only the best of its author's work but one which adds new dignity to the American drama.

ALLA NAZIMOVA and ALICE BRADY, for their impressive embodiment of Mrs. Mannon and Lavinia in the O'Neill tragedy.

S. N. BEHRMAN, for "Brief Moment," a suave and intelligent play which demonstrates its author's right to a place in the great tradition of high comedy.

EVELYN SCOTT, for "A Calendar of Sin," the first novel of the year, a long and highly moving story of the pitiful folly of the human race.

MORRIS R. COHEN, whose "Reason and Nature" seems destined to rank as a brilliant milestone in American thought.

EMMA GOLDMAN, for "Living My Life," a burning, partisan, and utterly fascinating chronicle of one of the world's most famous and most consistent rebels.

The anonymous authors of "Washington Merry-Go-Round," for giving us an honest and human picture of the many individuals who make up our national government.

Art and Architecture

The artists and anthropologists who assembled and presented to the public the EXPOSITION OF INDIAN TRIBAL ARTS, displayed in New York City in December and now to make a tour of the country in the interests of the colorful and appealing arts and crafts of the American Indian.

The designers and builders of the GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL BRIDGE, and particularly the Chief Engineer, O. H. AMMANN, for creating the most beautiful suspension bridge built in the neighborhood of New York City since the Brooklyn Bridge.

OTTO SOGLOW, for "Pretty Pictures" and for his Little King who shows weekly in the *New Yorker* how pleasant and simple it is to be a ruler if you only know how.

Music

MRS. HARRIET LANIER, who until her death on October 27 was the patron of the Friends of Music, and ARTHUR BODANZKY, the director of this organization, which for ten years has given New York some of its finest musical performances.

ARTURO TOSCANINI, Italian conductor of an American orchestra, who displayed in his defiance of and contempt for the compulsions of Italian fascism a fine championship of the ideals of artistic freedom.

Science

PROFESSOR HAROLD C. UREY and DR. G. M. MURPHY of Columbia University, and DR. F. G. BRICKWEDDE of the United States Bureau of Standards in Washington, for their discovery of the hydrogen isotrope, a new atom which will prove important in the study of atomic structure.

DRS. F. B. DOWNING, W. H. CAROTHERS, and IRA WILLIAMS, for the discovery of "duprene," a synthetic rubber suitable for commercial production.

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Wages Go Up in Russia

By LOUIS FISCHER

Moscow, December 5

"COMMUNISM in Russia is dead. Stalin has introduced unequal wages and thrown Soviet principles overboard." This is often the sensational verdict of week-end visitors or summer-month tourists in the Soviet Union. They do not know that Soviet Russia was never communistic, and that the Bolsheviks never made any such claim. For some time after 1917, according to the vulgar version, communism reigned supreme in the red republic. Then, presumably, the Bolsheviks engaged in backsliding, and now Karl Marx is merely a bearded fetish. "Look at the three classes on Soviet railroads." "Some people are better dressed than others." These "discoveries" lead the uninitiated "observer" to the incorrect conclusion that the Bolsheviks have shed their bolshevism.

When the Bolsheviks depart from equality of treatment and pay they are accused of inconsistency. When they are supposed to make everything "level" they are accused of regimentation. The fact of the matter is, however, that there was always inequality in the Soviet state, and there always will be until it passes out of the present "almost-Socialist" stage into the millennium of pure communism. The class war, which still exists in the U. S. S. R., implies inequality.

The extremes in Russia are closer than in any other country. Very sharp variations have disappeared. The richest man in the Soviet Union probably does not earn over $25,000 a year, and he is an exception—very likely a best-selling author. The destruction of the upper classes in Russia coincided with the improvement in the lot of the "under dog." All special privileges and many comforts and luxuries are made available first or only to the worker. The degree of inequality, consequently, is smaller than in bourgeois states. But it is there.

Little over a year ago foreign newspapers heralded a tremendous change in the U. S. S. R. The Bolsheviks, they announced, had abolished equality of wages. This was absolutely wrong. The Bolsheviks had never introduced equality of wages.

What happened in 1930 and what happened again in 1931 is simply this: the distance between the best-paid and the poorest-paid workers has been increased by a more universal application of the piece-work system. The wage differential is greater now than ever before in Soviet history, and recent decrees regarding progressive piece work promise to make it greater still. But no principle is involved, for a differential existed from the first day of the revolution.

The years between 1917 and 1921 were a period of military communism, not of militant communism. Exigencies of war forced the Bolsheviks to nationalize factories sooner than they had intended. They tried to abolish money not out of radicalism but because goods were few and had to be commandeered by the state for the army. Money had no value when private trade was prohibited, when the government did not sell, and when its limited civilian supplies were distributed as payments in kind to munition workers. Men received rations independently of the amount of work they performed, but some plants were favored over others and the population was divided into groups. Production was low. Although some leaders dreamed of planned economy, nobody had an immediate economic program. It was military communism plus chaos. That is not communism.

When the "New Economic Policy" stage was reached in 1921, trade-union leaders like Tomsky and Dogadov advocated equal pay. They thought primarily of the interests of the unskilled worker. The Supreme Economic Council, on the other hand, insisted on unequal pay. It was the employer and it wished to stimulate output. The government industrialists wanted to see a wide divergence between the lowest and highest wage; they urged a ratio of one to four. If a street-cleaner received 40 rubles a month, they would have given the mechanic 160. The trade unions, however, fought for and got a narrower ratio of 1 to 2.8; if the mechanic earned 160 rubles, the street-cleaner received about 57.

This was fitting for the early days of Soviet industrial activity. Most workers were badly paid, and they therefore needed protection against a too low minimum. In 1923, for instance, 64 per cent of the workers of Soviet Russia were receiving as little as 40 rubles or less a month. But in 1930 this figure had dropped to only 8 per cent. In 1923 a mere 1.4 per cent of the proletariat earned between 100 and 150 rubles per month; in 1930, 21.9 per cent. Similarly, workers receiving in excess of 150 rubles were only 0.1 per cent of the urban working class in 1923 but 7.6 per cent in 1930. As the state grew richer, it was more important to guarantee to the worker the possibility of an unhindered upward movement of wages than to perpetuate a system designed primarily to safeguard the interests of the diminishing body of the poorly paid.

Until the recent reforms all gainfully employed persons were divided into seventeen categories, with charwomen and errand boys in the first category and engineers in the seventeenth. Such a system obviously precluded equality of pay. But the difference between categories was small, and within each category a uniform wage existed. It is this that has now been abandoned. Categories are no more. Men on the same job, on the same kind of machine, may and do earn different incomes. Individual effort and ability determine earning power. There is no maximum wage. In other words—piece work.

Communists and radicals in capitalist countries attack piece work as a method of sweating. How, then, could the Bolsheviks introduce it so widely? I posed this question during the last few weeks to many prominent and rank-and-file Communists. Their answers followed the same line of argument.

"Piece work in the U. S. S. R. does not create unemployment as it must in capitalist countries," they said. "On the contrary, it creates more employment by producing more raw materials and machines for further manufacturing process. If piece-workers abroad were as protected by

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labor laws, and as well provided with free medical care, sanatoria, rest homes, and social insurance as the Soviet proletariat, if they had a seven-hour day and five-day week abroad, and if they exercised our indirect control over management, bourgeois piece work would not be an evil." One man added: "Piece work makes the capitalists richer. We therefore oppose it. Here piece work makes the proletarian state richer and does us laborers no harm. In fact, our wages have risen. We therefore favor it." If piece work spurs the Russian worker on to greater effort, it cannot hurt him. He has never exerted himself at his job. Even under the piece-work system, the energy he expends is considerably limited.

Piece work is not a Bolshevik ideal, and the Bolsheviks hope that some day living conditions, industrial conditions, culture, and social incentives will be such as to warrant a return to a flat, though not equal, wage. But this is a matter of the future. Today both the state and the workers are interested primarily in raising production.

Output has been on the upgrade in every Soviet industry I know of. Sometimes the rate of progress is mad: rubber was 48 per cent, oil 30 per cent, and locomotives 26 per cent higher in September, 1931, than in September, 1930. Production during the first ten months of 1931 was 19.4 per cent above the same period of 1930. Coal, too, has at last hit a new stride. In the coal and iron industries—the most important in the country and yet the most backward in fulfilling the cruelly exacting schedules of the Five-Year Plan—the government has now introduced a *progressive* piece-work-plus-bonus system which provides for income increases of from 30 to 100 per cent for workers and engineers. Other industries immediately entered loud claims for the same innovation, but the government has replied with an equally loud no. As an alternative, Piatakov, vice-chairman of the Supreme Economic Council, has ordered plant directors to raise wages by raising individual productivity and thus factory productivity and thus the factory's available funds for wage payment, instead, as has been the practice too often heretofore, of hiring new hands in order to increase output. It is held that the fulfilment of the plan by employing fresh workers not only flattens the curve of wage increases but limits the labor supply for newly constructed industrial units. The government prefers stimulated productivity per man and, consequently, higher wages per man.

Despite the intensification of effort resulting from piece work, the number of workers continues to rise very sharply. Persons working for hire in the U. S. S. R. numbered 10,990,000 in1926-27, 12,394,000 in 1929, and 14,587,000 in 1930. If government officials, teachers, and agricultural laborers are excluded from these totals, the remainder is the industrial proletariat—Russia's ruling class. It counted 5,000,000 in 1926-27, 6,000,000 in 1929, and 7,800,000 in 1930. Estimates for 1931 put the strength of the urban proletariat at 9,500,000. The figure mounts quickly, and with hundreds of new plants beginning operations as the Five-Year Plan draws to a close, it should reach 11,000,000 to 12,000,000 by 1932. Hence the absence of unemployment. Hence the scarcity of workers and the necessity of bringing unskilled laborers direct from the village and women direct from the kitchen sink to modern factories, where their efficiency and the quality of their products must be poor. Immigration of foreign workers on an increasing scale will partially stop the gap. Despite its fabulous birth-rate (an annual excess of births over deaths of about 3,500,000), the Soviet Union may yet be another America to Europe's surplus humanity. Meanwhile, however, the dearth of skilled or semi-skilled labor severely handicaps Bolshevik industry. The government is spending hundreds of millions of rubles on training-schools for new *cadres*. It loses millions more when raw recruits ruin expensive equipment. But the state has no choice. This is all part of the vast expense of educating a nation to leadership and a better standard of living.

As a result of the growth of the proletariat, the state's wage bill has risen many billions. Wage raises have sent it up still farther. Ivan Kraval, a member of the collegium of the Labor Commissariat, tells me that real wages are 70 per cent higher in 1931 than in 1913. There can be no doubt about the increase of real wages between 1921 and 1927. The question is whether they improved during the Five-Year Plan period—since 1928. At first glance, many observers would reply in the negative. But investigation and thought warrant another view. The U. S. S. R. is the most difficult country in the world in which to check the realness of income. A cost-of-living index would be endlessly complicated. Every worker in the U. S. S. R. is receiving more paper currency in his pay envelope. Sometimes his monetary salary is 50 to 100 per cent higher than it was three years ago. But what can he buy with it? Two weavers earn two hundred rubles each. The factory of one has a closed cooperative store which is fairly well stocked. In it he can purchase meat, butter on occasions, manufactured articles, and vegetables at cheap cooperative prices. He seldom resorts to the free private market or to the expensive "commercial" state stores. His real wage has certainly risen perceptibly above the 1927 level. But the second weaver has no closed cooperative, and must supplement the poor supplies of the ordinary "open" cooperative with purchases at exorbitant prices. His real income suffers. Or, take another case. One factory or office has established a restaurant. For sixty kopeks an employee can eat a hearty meal which would probably cost two rubles and sixty kopeks to prepare at home. He can also carry dinners to his wife and children. Millions of persons gainfully employed avail themselves of these low-price kitchens. Their real wages mount correspondingly. Some factories and government institutions, however, have as yet organized no such communal feeding facilities. Their employees have a higher cost of living and lower real wages. The supply of food and manufactured articles has appreciably improved in the last year, and the depression in real income which followed the inception of the Five-Year Plan has consequently been largely erased as far as manual workers are concerned. Officials, however, do not enjoy the privileges of factory proletarians, and still have a hard time making both ends meet unless—as is sometimes the case with physicians, economists, and others—they hold two or three full-pay jobs.

Other circumstances must be considered in reckoning Soviet real wages. In his classic volume on "Real Wages in the United States: 1890-1926," Professor Paul H. Douglas includes many items other than direct money income. For instance, he attributes 5 per cent out of a 55 per cent increase in real wages to the drop in the number of each worker's dependents. In Russia this percentage would be much higher. The number of women in industry, according

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to official statistics, was 673,000 in 1927-28 and 1,276,000 in 1931. Many thousands of workers' wives, in addition, have found non-factory jobs. And when wives support themselves, the real wages of their husbands go up. Moreover, with the unsatisfied demand for labor, more youths are entering factories and thus helping their parents raise the family's income. The fact that universal compulsory education now exists for elementary and in many districts for secondary schools, and that new *crèches* spring up every day, means that more children are receiving at least one free hot meal a day—another item in the workers' real budget.

Apart from money the wages of the Soviet proletariat include social benefits valued at 30 per cent of real wages. Such social services are an annual fortnight's vacation with pay, free medical aid, free pharmacy, free cures in rest homes and sanatoria (a million workers stayed in sanatoria this year), six or eight weeks' vacation with pay for women before child delivery and the same period after delivery (Soviet babies now receive a little free layette of diapers, shirts, socks, blankets, and the like when they are born), free night sanatoria, sick insurance, and free or cheap burial for all trade-union members. These facilities have improved in recent years and therefore have a greater real value.

For the women who are gainfully employed for the first time, and for a million or more peasants who enter industry each year, any wage is a bigger real wage than what they formerly earned. Literally hundreds of thousands of workers, moreover, attend night schools or special courses to acquire skill. Such added qualification immediately fetches a better price. Since the possibilities for advancement within Soviet industry are unlimited, a constant movement of workers is taking place from a lower to a higher rung of the ladder, and coincidentally to a higher real wage.

It is difficult to get tickets to Moscow theaters nowadays. Why? Because whole performances are bought out by factories and workers' clubs. Some, but too few, proletarians have occupied new cooperative apartments. I have talked to workers about their incomes. "In 1927 you could have bought all the butter you wanted," I argue. "Yes, but the family was poor and we couldn't afford butter. And sometimes when we could we had no desire for it. We had not yet reached a point where we wanted butter." Even today the worker who cannot purchase butter at low cooperative prices does without it. It, and other necessities, are not yet necessities to him. The living conditions of Soviet citizens must be compared not with those of the richest foreign countries but with the way the average Russian lived before the revolution. In that light there is not the minutest doubt that Soviet workers are much better off than in 1914. And they would be still better off if they drank less vodka.

I do not know whether hours of work affect real-wage calculations. They are certainly an important factor in the standard of living. In the U. S. S. R. wages rise as the number of hours drops. The average length of the working day in Russia in 1913 was 9.87 hours; in 1931, 7.02. Reduction of the working days per month further decreases the time each worker spends at his job. The five-day week still obtains in many factories. It means that a worker enjoys six sabbaths a month instead of the normal four plus. Where it has been temporarily abandoned for complicated technical and disciplinary reasons, a six-day week with five sabbaths a month has been substituted. This, Kraval of the Labor Commissariat informs me, is only a transitional stage. Factories employing 400,000 workingmen have already been transferred to the new system—four days of seven-and-one-half-hour length followed by two complete days of rest—which the government proposes to introduce generally during the second Five-Year Plan. And the goal which Soviet Russia intends to reach by 1937 is a five-hour day for all factory workers. Office employees already have a six-hour day.

Is There War in Manchuria?

By A. E. HINDMARSH

TO the very casual observer this query may seem flippant because most of us think of war as organized bloodshed by armed forces of states—and that is commonly known to be prevalent in Manchuria today. After a moment's pause, however, one is puzzled by obvious contradictions. Is not war "outlawed" by the Pact of Paris? Are not both Japan and China bound by the provisions of the League of Nations Covenant to abstain from war? Has war stolen upon a world which has during the past decade more and more gloried in the increasing strength of its agencies for peace? What of these agencies, and of that world public opinion whose moral force was to be expressed through them in behalf of lasting world peace?

The average man, he whose "opinion" was to constitute a representative portion of this great moral force, is troubled; he is mentally harassed in direct proportion to the depth of his abiding faith in the potency of the world's peace machinery. If the military encounters in Manchuria do constitute war, then the League Covenant and the Pact of Paris are surely empty of effectiveness, have betrayed fond hopes. If the killing of several hundred persons, combatants and noncombatants, is not war it surely approaches wholesale murder—and should be stopped. In any event, most of us who are not handicapped in our thinking by certain legal prescriptions and definitions have come to the conclusion that the League of Nations and the Kellogg-Briand pact are certainly devoid of a large part of the "force for peace" attributed to them by smooth-spoken officials and hopeful private enthusiasts. We are sure that international peace is either broken or threatened, that the trouble is patent and undisguised, and that vaunted international agencies and a world of public opinion seem to have accomplished nothing in arrest of that trouble.

Of course if this very elementary, perhaps naive, view of the situation were presented to one of the agile-minded statesmen called upon to think of the matter, it would easily be demolished. In the first place, he would say, the struggle in China is not war in the legal sense—it may be war in

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fact (*de facto*) but it is not legal war (*de jure*). If you follow that and boldly ask, Is it a status of peace, then, which prevails as between China and Japan? he will answer that it is not peace either. Then comes the additional coverage—it is not peace, it is not war, it is a status midway between peace and war! If you insist on names you will find that the practice of nations for centuries has gradually condoned a relationship between states avowedly engaged in physical combat but neither at peace nor at war; this condition is called a status of "reprisals," and the measures of physical force are called acts of reprisal or sometimes simply reprisals.

The legal doctrine and the practice of reprisals have a long history. Statesmen and jurists have reasoned certain forms of physical violence out of the categories of both peace and war since early medieval times. After the end of the Napoleonic wars, however, the anomalous concept became much more useful. As the rights of neutral states became more fixed and certain and the duties of states at war became correspondingly greater, practical reasons for avoidance by bellicose states of the war status increased. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth we find major Powers availing themselves of the doctrine of reprisals to evade the legal and moral consequences which would attach to their acts if undertaken as incidents in a "war." States and statesmen were willing and able to prostitute fact to theory in order thus to acquire a certain freedom from legal obligations, indefinite and vague as these often were. Today a state which goes to war is subject to much more onerous moral and legal liabilities, especially if that state is a League member or a signatory of the Pact of Paris, and Japan and China are both.

It makes little practical difference what we call these acts of warfare. Depending upon the predominant element of force used, they have been called embargoes, pacific blockades, bombardment, occupation, intervention, and just plain seizure of property. In American practice we have chosen usually the occupation method, called it intervention, and justified it on specious grounds as a form of reprisals. More vivid minds have referred to this method of using force short of war to secure state policy or rights as "quarterdeck diplomacy." It so happens that American intervention has usually been successful without resort to widespread military operations; moreover, the grievances on which the intervention was grounded have usually been fairly clearly understood at home. American public opinion, therefore, has not been prone to question the exact nature of the anomalous situation which appears to exist today in Manchuria.

Prior to the World War the use of measures of force while refusing to recognize the existence of a state of war was a frequent practice of Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. During the past century the so-called pacific blockade has been employed on at least nine occasions by France and Great Britain against smaller Powers, mainly in South America; in the same period these armed forces of states have occupied strategic portions of foreign territory to enforce various state demands. From 1850 to 1907 some fifty-three revolutions occurred in the area of the Panama Canal Zone, requiring the United States on many occasions to use its naval forces to enforce treaty stipulations. The bombardment of Greytown, Nicaragua, by United States forces in 1853 is notable in this series. Failure of the Nicaraguan government to protect American citizens trading in the area brought bombardment and complete destruction to the coast city. A more recent instance was the occupation by United States forces (1,000 men) of Vera Cruz, Mexico, bombardment of part of the city, and seizure of the customs houses and control of the customs revenue.

Some twenty-five to thirty instances of the use of force during the past century by great Powers against small Powers could be cited. In each case it was denied that a state of war existed; the ground for resort to force was put on the inability of the smaller state to offer a sufficient protection to the nationals of the complaining state or on the failure of the smaller state to live up to treaty obligations.

Today Japan appears to base similar measures of force on similar grounds. Unless something has occurred since 1914 to render illegal acts condoned as legal during the preceding century, Japan's position, from a legal point of view, seems impregnable, for it was generally agreed that the practice of reprisals had, during the nineteenth century, acquired legality in international law.

At this point the inquirer will be assured generally that the past decade has included changes vastly altering the situation. He will be referred to the Covenant of the League, to the Nine-Power Treaty of the Washington conference, and to the Kellogg-Briand pact. These, we are told, legally prohibit the course of action taken by Japan and assumed by her to be legal and sanctioned by international law and practice.

If any one general belief has prompted men to support post-war peace movements, especially the League of Nations and the Pact of Paris, it is the conviction that these are means of preserving peace by eliminating war. Others of us, not quite so sanguine, have tended to believe that present peace machinery will certainly aid in eliminating the causes of war. However one may look at the matter, the belief has held that somehow or other the settlement of international disputes by resort to force of arms was now relegated to history and less enlightened days. Few of us have wondered just how far a state is legally able—if willing—to go, under existing international commitments, in the use of force short of war. The League has put this question to itself and has refused to answer. True, resort to reprisals or measures of force short of war is usually less widespread and less disastrous than formal war; but such measures often make war inevitable unless the weaker party—which may at the same time be the justly aggrieved party—is willing to concede all demands made upon it.

The facts in the Manchurian situation fit precisely into this nineteenth-century picture. Japanese troops have occupied large territorial zones on Chinese territory. The territory so occupied is beyond that area falling clearly within the scope of treaty arrangements; but Japan contends that the military occupation is justified on two grounds—namely, to protect her nationals living in the occupied territory and to protect treaty rights bearing on the Japanese-owned rail lines. Treaty rights and protection of nationals abroad were the favorite grounds for military intervention throughout the nineteenth century. The present intervention is of such a nature that China would, if her military strength were comparable with that of Japan, regard it as equivalent to a declaration of war, and war would ensue—that is, war *de jure*, formal, legal war, declared and duly notified to the

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world. But China is not in a position to do that; she has relied on the moral strength of her position; the specific source of her reliance is the Covenant of the League of Nations. Why has the League been unable to take any positive steps to bring about a settlement of a situation admittedly critical since September 18, 1931? The answer is simple: the Covenant of the League aims at the preservation of peace by the prevention of war. The use of force short of war is another matter.

This failure to recognize in the Covenant a status of international violence between peace and war is a loophole in that document apt to be far more disastrous than minor procedural lacunae concerning which volumes have been written. But Japan is not pioneering in this field. In 1923 Italy bombarded the Greek island of Corfu, killing some seventy persons, and occupied the island until her demands were satisfied. Greece appealed to the League, but Italy was able successfully to contend that such measures were not prohibited by the Covenant. At the time of the appeal both the Assembly and the Council were in session but no action was taken by either body. The moment was opportune for the Council to define its powers under the Covenant but it failed to take a decided stand. Its failure gave a certain strength to the Italian point of view—a view which Japan is able to rely upon today as a strong precedent. Before the Council the Italian representative, Mr. Salandra, pointed out that the Council acquired no jurisdiction under Articles 12 or 15 of the Covenant, for the dispute was not one "likely to lead to a rupture" as there specified. (Under the circumstances Greece, like China today, was too weak to offer more than fervid oral protest at Geneva.) Contending that these articles were founded on a danger of war, he continued: "The peace of the world is not troubled or threatened by Italy. It would more likely be threatened if responsible states were able to assume that there was a means of escaping the consequences of their own misdeeds by complaining of sanctions and endeavoring to insure that the causes which rendered these sanctions necessary should be forgotten." Greece had already indicated the hopelessness of appealing under Article 16 (setting forth sanctions against a League member which resorts to war in disregard of its Covenant obligations) by shifting her ground from that article to Article 15. Nor could the Council have taken positive action under Article 10, for there is no ground on which to classify reprisals generally as "aggression."

The League has rendered this criterion next to useless by its inability to decide on any general principles approaching a definition of an aggressor. The very limit of the Council's action in 1923-24 was its statement of competence to undertake an inquiry. It remains apparent that the Covenant is aimed primarily at the elimination of "war" in the legal sense; in effect this is to encourage resort to other forms of aggression, admittedly valid under the Covenant. These methods of mere incipient warfare are apt to impose adequate physical pressure on the weak state without imposing on the aggressor generally accepted legal restraints such as neutral rights and laws of war, vague and uncertain as they are.

Of course the actual situation would be different if the disputing Powers were more nearly of equal military strength. The history of reprisals indicates that it is primarily a force method employed against weak Powers by strong Powers which, for reasons of policy, are unwilling to undertake a full-fledged war. The aversion of a strong world public opinion to war is more than ever likely to drive war under cover. It is likely to emerge in more expedient guises—some normal and inevitable, such as tariff "wars," trade competition, and propaganda; others fraught with danger and verging on or involving physical combat, such as various forms of reprisals described above.

Whatever may be Japan's moral fault in the present situation her legal position before the League is impregnable in the light of the history of international law before 1920 and in view of the Council's interpretation of its own constitution in the Corfu affair in 1924. It is impossible to point to any portion of the Covenant which her military actions in China have clearly violated; on the contrary, Japan can point to a long line of precedents in which Great Britain, France, and the United States have pursued similar courses of action in similar circumstances. Legally Japan rests her case on solid ground. The fact that she rests her case at Geneva solely on legal bases cannot be held against her. In recent years the world has rarely seen a state fail to take full advantage of every legal and technical support available.

It is beyond doubt that the present apparent failure of the League to grapple successfully and authoritatively with the problem will have wide and damaging effects on the prestige of that institution. Adverse effects were noticeable in 1924 after the Italian defiance, but the relative youth of the League was offered as excuse for its impotency. The real task, however, is so to phrase the positive obligations of the Covenant as to include measures of force short of war in the same category as war in the legal sense. In short, the time is ripe to abolish the casuistic distinction between war in the legal sense and war in fact. The distinction is an invention of hair-splitting theorists who attempted, especially in the nineteenth century, to reconcile the refusal of major Powers to assume legal responsibilities of war with recurring acts of warfare. By distinguishing *acts* of war and a *state* of war it was possible to reconcile theory and fact. Today we are unable to continue this once useful fiction; the distinction is now positively dangerous in so far as it offers an expedient by which aggressive states are able to evade heavy responsibilities, both moral and legal. Moreover, the world has become so closely knit that it is no longer possible to regard acts of warfare as confined in their effects to a restricted locality. Overt acts of violence arouse national flames, and these tend to become widespread, whether such acts are referred to as reprisals of a "pacific" nature or as open war.

Until the Covenant of the League is adapted to include definite restraint on "measures of force," whether or not such measures are subject to classification as part of war or as "likely to lead to a rupture" (after all who knows what is "likely" to follow as a consequence in international affairs?), until that revision is made, the League will continue without jurisdiction in a field of imminent danger. Unfortunately, the moral force, too, of the League's work, of its reports and recommendations, will diminish to a vanishing-point as incidents such as the Corfu and Manchurian affairs recur.

A question arises as to the effectiveness of the Kellogg-Briand pact. The fact that the parties to that agreement undertake not to wage aggressive war and limit themselves

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to the use of "pacific" means for the settlement of international disputes has no legal effect upon the use of such measures as are now being executed in Manchuria. Such measures, under the general classification of reprisals, have for centuries been accepted in international law as "pacific" means of settling disputes; they are held to differ from other methods, such as negotiation and arbitration, in that they are non-amicable rather than amicable.

Even if Japan were to acknowledge a state of war as existing, the Pact of Paris could hardly be regarded as of controlling effect. Its force is negatived by exceptions specified in negotiations; especially is it denuded of effect by the generally noted reservation that it does not prohibit wars of self-defense. Until aggression is defined (and it has not been), every war is apt to be regarded as a self-defense war.

The merit of the pact is in its moral force; it is doubtful if it was even intended to have more than a moral effect. Probably it was intended that the League Covenant should give rise to more positive obligations; but it too, in this instance, is limited to moral influence. The only other document cited as placing legal restraint on the actions of Japan is the Nine-Power Treaty signed at Washington (1921-22). By this Japan, together with several other Powers, pledged herself "to respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China." Just what may be the legal content of this undertaking is a subject of speculation. Japan has consistently contended that her actions in Manchuria in no way violate the pledge as stated. It is to be noted that all the terms therein used—"sovereignty," "independence," and "integrity"—are very general in nature, wholly defying definition. In the recent advisory opinion of the World Court concerning the Austro-German customs union the question of what constituted the "independence" of Austria (as referred to in the Treaty of St. Germain, Article 88) was in issue. A majority of eight judges were able to agree that Austria's independence means "the continued existence of Austria within the present frontiers, as a separate state, with the sole right of decision *inter alia* in economic matters." But seven dissenting judges were unwilling to go so far in defining the scope of the term. The meaning of "sovereignty" and "territorial and administrative integrity" is even more vague.

The significance of the present state of Sino-Japanese relations lies in the fact that, in spite of so-called advances made since 1920 toward eliminating war and the causes of war, there exists today no legal restraint on the use of force methods arbitrarily regarded by a state as "pacific." Such methods, when directed by a powerful state against one pitifully weak, may not lead to war at once; but they do cause resentment in neighboring states, and, what is just as serious, this freedom from restraint certainly diminishes the frequency and importance of sincerely peaceful methods of settling international disputes.

Originally there was no reason why Japan and China could not have agreed on a settlement of their difficulties at Geneva, but the extent to which the civil section of the Japanese government is now committed by the military—which has acted "legally" from the beginning so far as international commitments are concerned—prevents immediate reversal of policy. Had force measures been from the start clearly contrary to solemn agreements, both the League and the Japanese government would have been strengthened in their desire to reach an early solution without further violence.

It seems apparent that modern peace-preserving efforts are glaringly defective so long as they fail to include prohibition of all force methods. Military and moral forces are probably maintained primarily for potential wars, but their use in time of peace is important. By limiting the legal scope of such use, or by eliminating it entirely, states would be induced to support arbitral and judicial methods of settling interstate disputes. In the absence of such limitation or elimination, military and naval strength still remains too important a factor in international relations.

Is Uncle Sam "Going Native"?

The Stars and Stripes Forever

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, December 26

SINCE joining the ranks of the unemployed, Santa Claus probably doesn't care much what happens, but if he again exhibits himself in the United States this year he had better wrap his emaciated form in the Stars and Stripes. Every reliable sign indicates that we are about to witness a resurgence of nationalistic spirit far more savage and intense than that which characterized the disillusionment following the World War. Unless your venerable correspondent is a trifle cracked, the average American is not merely muttering "America first" to himself, he is getting ready to yell: "To hell with Europe!" Whether this is right or wrong, wise or foolish, I do not intend to argue. The important thing is the fact itself. Political conditions shift rapidly, but at this juncture Herbert Hoover is heading surely for the fate that overtook Woodrow Wilson. Our dear old ragged Uncle Sam exhibits every symptom of "going native." It is true the House by more than three to one, and the Senate by more than five to one, voted to ratify the Hoover moratorium on war debts. But only those of us who were on the ground could appreciate the poignant envy with which scores of Senators and Representatives listened to the attacks on the proposal and secretly wished to God they were free to join in them.

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THAT vote will produce some important political casualties. A great many honest and well-informed persons (including the editors of *The Nation*) believe the moratorium was necessary to prevent the economic collapse of Europe. But whether you like the moratorium or whether you don't (I don't), it is impossible to excuse the devious,

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insincere, and irregular methods which the Administration employed to put it through. Instead of taking the orderly course of calling a special session of Congress, President Hoover submitted his proposal to individual members of Congress by telegram, and after receiving private assurances of support from a majority, submitted to a revision of his original proposal at the hands of France, and then insisted that the majority was pledged to support the revised proposal! Hiram Johnson, in my opinion, was thoroughly justified in declaring that the issue was between dictatorship and representative government. After all, we do have a Constitution and it is just possible that the preservation of our form of government is more important than the moratorium. The sight of the President of the United States taking a straw vote of Congress on a revenue measure involving $250,000,000, and then holding the members to it, is a trifle racy for these aging arteries.

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THE case for international cooperation has not been helped by the testimony before the Senate Finance Committee of three eminent bankers—Thomas Lamont of Morgan and Company, Charles E. Mitchell of the National City Bank, and Otto Kahn of Kuhn, Loeb and Company. Mr. Mitchell's tactics were especially damaging to the cause. It appears all too plainly that the financial houses represented by these estimable gentlemen, and their competitors, succeeded in selling to the American public a series of foreign securities on which the buyers now stand to take a loss of more than two billion dollars. Yet immediately prior to his appearance on the witness stand Mitchell sought at a private conference to persuade Democratic Senators that "undue" agitation of this subject would have dire economic consequences. His attempt to bully and patronize the committee gained nothing except the sycophantic applause of the New York financial writers who came in his train, and caused a painful impression on both houses of Congress. Lamont did better, and Kahn was infinitely more candid than either, but the ugly central fact remains that the houses which floated this paper made a profit by doing it and the innocent investors are threatened with an appalling loss. Despite the bland suavity of Mr. Lamont and the magnificent truculence of Mr. Mitchell the real question is one of good judgment and good faith on the part of our largest banking institutions. The question has not been answered.

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AMONG the incidents of the moratorium battle, none promises more interesting consequences than the solemn decision of the Administration to put Representative Louis McFadden of Pennsylvania "on the spot" for having attacked President Hoover. During his long and industrious career in the House Mr. McFadden has been a regular and influential Republican. There is no intention here to defend or criticize him. The facts are that he made a serious charge against the President; that he offered to produce evidence supporting it; that instead of accepting his challenge the Administration took the cowardly and brutal course of depriving him of patronage, Senator Dave Reed announcing that "hereafter we will treat McFadden just as if he had died." As usual, it now appears that "Little Dave" spoke too soon. His colleague, Senator Davis, was supposed to be a party to the political crucifixion of McFadden, but Davis, whose ears are flattened from constant pressing against the soil of Pennsylvania, has sent private word to McFadden that he has no sympathy with that vengeful enterprise. Indeed, the information now reaching Washington indicates not only that McFadden will be renominated for his seat in the House, but that he would have an excellent chance of beating Reed for the Senate. Mrs. Gifford Pinchot's decision to run against McFadden on the ground that "he insulted our President" has not tended to increase her husband's prestige in this community. This is a singularly awkward time for any Pinchot to be running on a "support-Hoover" platform. I should like to have heard the conversation that took place between the Governor and Mrs. Pinchot before she announced her intention.

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TO suggest at this stage of the depression that Hoover has any plan for curing it would be like taking a pulmotor to a funeral, which would be unseemly. His main prescription since Congress convened has been for a Reconstruction Finance Corporation—which turns out on examination to be a plan to lend government funds to the railroads. Nobody doubts that the railroads are in a bad way, and why such pains were taken to disguise the actual purpose of this plan is just another of those Hoover mysteries. The proposal is embodied in a Senate bill which abounds in allusions to banks, building and loan associations, insurance companies, and agriculture, and which finally, in the most covert manner, "also" includes railroads. The truth is that a billion dollars' worth of railroad securities will mature in the next three years. The railroads must borrow money to meet them and naturally they are eager to get it at a low rate. Under this bill the Treasury would subscribe the $500,000,000 capital of the new corporation, which on the basis of loans made by it would have power to issue $1,500,000,000 in debentures. Because of the intangible security on which they rest, debentures bear a high interest rate in comparison with bonds. Why, if the government desires to raise money to be lent to the railroads, does it not obtain that money by issuing bonds? Senator Glass has raised that question and it has been raised still more pointedly by bankers. In this instance Mr. Hoover has again reversed himself by deciding to "put the government into business" on a scale which eventually might result in government possession of railroads, banks, and insurance companies. That idea does not frighten me, but if we are going to do it, why not do it in the most economical and business-like way?

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AT this point someone is certain to ask what became of the National Credit Corporation—born at the famous Sunday-night consultation at the White House—which was to apply the magic of private initiative to the puzzle of frozen credits. The answer is simple but sad. About $400,000,000 has been subscribed to the pool, but only $10,000,000 of it has been lent! Aladdin fumbles or the lamp has lost its power, and with sorrow and resignation Mr. Hoover will sign precisely the sort of credit measure that Senator Glass sees fit to hand him.

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If I Were Dictator*

By HAROLD J. LASKI

I LACK, I fear, the disposition which loves the command of men, and were I to succeed to great place, my impulse would be to disembarrass myself of its power and inconveniences. I prefer, therefore, to indicate the lines upon which, as I conceive, social policy should move, if we are to preserve and to enlarge the confines of civilization.

1. The supreme need, to me, is a democratic world, by which I mean a world where the personality of the common man has full room for self-expression. Such a world I believe to be impossible in the presence of great economic inequalities; and I believe, therefore, that the greatest urgency of our time is a policy which seeks to effect this purpose. It means, I think, that the essential sources of wealth should be socialized—finance, power, coal, transport, iron and steel. It requires the destruction of that system of inheritance which creates and makes so largely permanent a leisured class which performs no function for society in return for the gains it receives. It would seek such an equalization of income as would make men and women significant for the functions they perform and not for the property to which they are annexed.

2. An equal society of this kind seems to me the high-road to many other goods I desire. Without such a society I do not see any effective prospect of freedom of thought. For so long as thought is offensive to a given social order in which inequality exists, those who profit by the inequality will stigmatize such thought as sedition; and they will use the machinery of the law to suppress it. Yet without freedom of thought the personality of man is painfully abridged. The lesson of his experience cannot be made articulate. He is forced into silence; and it is then assumed by his governors that his silence is a measure of his content.

3. An equal society alone offers the prospect of a decent educational system. In our present unequal society we educate a few in the habits of command and most for the duty of obedience. We make financiers, salesmen, doctors, lawyers, mechanics, cashiers, laborers; we do not make men. For a true education would open to the many a direct avenue to the cultural heritage of the race. This, for the vast majority, is a closed book even in Anglo-American civilization. The creative use of leisure, which, in an age dominated by the machine, is for most the period of significance, is unattainable by men whom education has not trained to the use of the mind in speculative matters. An unequal society does not permit this training to be widespread; partly because it wants, as nearly as may be, a monopoly of knowledge for the class already in possession, and partly because a society in which men and women were educated, that is, trained to the use of mind as a skeptical instrument, would not long continue to endure the consequences of inequality.

4. I desire an equal society, further, because it seems to me the condition of international peace. The roots of war are almost invariably economic in nature. National struggles are not rivalries between peoples, though propaganda exploits the possibilities of group-hate to make them appear to be such; they are struggles between the exploiting classes among different peoples to achieve greater gain. International peace, as I think, demands the disappearance of the sovereign state and its replacement by a world order. For the sovereign state is, in all essential matters, a panoply assumed by a dominant class to use the resources of the state for its own purposes. The wickedness of armaments, the follies of tariffs, the problems caused by different standards of living are all insoluble so long as each nation state remains in vital realms the arbiter of its own destiny. Only as we attempt a world ordering of what are, in effect, matters of world concern can we meet the issues of our time realistically and in terms of deliberate plan. A world order is, in any sense instinct with serious meaning, impossible in an unequal society; for it is to the interest of the economically powerful to prevent its advent. Even where a group of these, as the international bankers, may seem to favor international peace, it is with the stabilization of their power, and not with the attainment of social justice, that they are in reality concerned.

5. An equal society is, further, the only condition upon which decent treatment of the backward or less powerful peoples seems to be possible. A capitalistic society is driven by its nature to exploit the native of Africa, or India, or the Philippines. A world order, based upon the concept of equality, would make it possible to enforce the concept of trusteeship now theoretically inherent in the system of mandates; and the road from trusteeship to freedom is a direct one. But we shall not travel that road unless we first pass by the gate of equality. The profits of the alternative routes are too high.

6. I should like, further, to see the rapid erosion of organized religions. The accusation that they are the opium of the people seems to me the more justified, the more completely their history and consequences are understood. They make men satisfied with, or complacent about, the injustice of the present social order by the prospect they offer, without a tithe of serious evidence, of a future state of blessedness. They perpetuate all over the world obsolete systems of morality and sex relations. They substitute charity for justice and thus act as an anodyne for the conscience of the rich and a plaster for the sufferings of the poor. They develop habits among their members which are a hindrance to the fuller operation of reason in social life.

7. I desire, also, to see the practice of birth control—perhaps the greatest discovery since the invention of fire—made freely available to all social classes. It is the main avenue to the emancipation of women. It is the best safeguard for a proper relationship between parents and children. It is the surest way of making effective comradeship possible between men and women. I know few things so intolerable as the fact that divine revelation should be claimed for the obsolete habits of an Eastern nomadic tribe and their consequent imposition upon a society which might otherwise open a high-road to freedom. Birth control alone makes possible the conquest by society of hereditary degeneracy. If Roman Catho-

* The sixth of a series of articles on this subject. Others, by Morris Ernst and Oswald Garrison Villard, will follow in early issues.—Editor The Nation.

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lics and others find its methods offensive, no one asks that they should practice them. But they ought not to make their private view of moral truth the measure of permissible social practice.

8. Finally, if I could, I should like to suffuse all our educational systems with an insistence upon the two essential virtues of skepticism and experiment. Until we are prepared to admit that most of what we announce as necessary truth or vital institutions are, in large part, merely the truth or institutions to which we have grown accustomed, we shall ourselves place the main barriers in the way of social advance. Skepticism is essential that we may not stay unduly the prisoners of our past; experiment that we may not be paralyzed by the unwillingness to be dogmatic about matters of social constitution. Both promote the habit of tolerance; and tolerance has ever been the parent of discovery.

The Critic's Dilemma*

II. The Jest and the Ear

By JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

IN the first instalment of this discussion some emphasis was laid upon the patent fact that various significant works of art have been executed in accordance with aesthetic theories which are plainly incompatible with one another. The realm of poetry, for example, is obviously more extensive than is implied by the various great poets and great critics who have undertaken to define it, and what is true of poetry is no less true of literature in general. Tradition and taste affirm the worth of artists more varied than theories of art can find room for, and the criteria proposed by any school of criticism imply the dismissal of works which readers of discrimination are by no means willing to neglect.

A familiarity with the history of human opinion and its variability does not, however, produce skepticism—except in the minds of those who are already temperamentally inclined toward it. Hence, it is hardly to be expected that critics should cease to advance general opinions concerning the nature and function of art merely because they know how widely such opinions have differed from one another in the past, and it is, perhaps, not at all desirable that they should do so. Convictions of some sort are necessary for effective writing, either creative or critical, just as they are necessary for effective living, and life as well as literature has gone on because people have passionately believed—on quite insufficient evidence—that art, God, justice, duty, righteousness, and the rest consisted in this or that.

Human society depends upon those various artificial structures which are known as law, religion, philosophy, morality, and the rest, but what it requires is merely *a* law, *a* religion, *a* philosophy, and so on. It can not only exist but flourish upon the basis of the most varied theoretical foundations so long as it has genuinely accepted one or another, and what is true of the social arts is equally true of those which are representative. The convictions of Flaubert and the convictions of Verlaine each promoted the development of one sort of literature, just as the convictions of Saint Francis and the convictions of Cellini each promoted the development of one sort of life. Whole societies as well as mere individual lives or individual poems may be executed in very different manners, but successful works of literature no less than successful lives or successful societies are always faithful to some style, and the aesthetic theories which profess to define the aims and methods of literature as a whole actually do, very often, accurately define one of these possible styles—just as ethical systems which profess to define the whole duty of man actually do lay down the rules in accordance with which a style of living may successfully be achieved.

It is therefore neither surprising nor wholly unfortunate that theories of art should develop as inevitably and as variously as do theories of law, of justice, and of morality. It is not even surprising that a certain long unfashionable intransigence should now be making its reappearance among literary critics, and that a kind of authoritarianism should once more be defended—with grave dignity by the admirers of T. S. Eliot and with a bumptious truculence by the disciples of Irving Babbitt. The skeptic can reflect calmly that similar opinions have flourished before, and that they have even encouraged the production of various worthy works without having made impossible the development of other and quite interesting styles. Thus there were classicists before Mr. Babbitt who did not, nevertheless, prevent the appearance of Rousseau; and Pope no more prevented the development of Keats than the contempt of Keats annihilated the merits of Pope. But when this same skeptic is driven to defend his own unwillingness to leap upon any particular bandwagon, he may take comfort in the fact that skepticism still has the best of the argument at least, and that by logical methods it is still as difficult to establish absolutes in the field of literary criticism as it is to establish them in the field of politics or morality.

As Shakespeare has it, "The prosperity of a jest lies in the ear of the hearer," and aesthetics is concerned with the effect which a work of art has upon us. But this effect is the result of an apperception; it is conditioned by the associations set up between the various elements of the vicarious experience afforded by the work in question and our own individual memories, opinions, and experiences. It differs, therefore, from person to person, and two critics who appear to be passing different judgments upon the same poem or tale are in reality passing judgment upon two different things which may bear very little resemblance to one another. Nor is there any way to avoid this, since art is in its nature suggestive, since it can function only by calling attention to something in ourselves, and any book which we read becomes, inevitably, as we read it, a collaboration between its author and ourselves.

* The first article in this series by Mr. Krutch was printed in *The Nation* of December 2. The third, and concluding, article will appear in an early issue.—EDITOR THE NATION.

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Even the most dogmatic of critics commonly recognize the more obvious conclusions to be drawn from the fact that the value of a work of literature depends upon the intelligibility of its symbols and upon the existence of someone to whom those symbols are, at a given moment, intelligible. Thus no one would deny that it would be useless to discuss the value of an epic composed in a completely lost language, and few, if any, would fail to recognize another aspect of the same fact by admitting that a certain maturity of knowledge and experience, a certain age in years, must be reached before "Othello" becomes a greater work of literature than the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. Yet once this fact is admitted, the whole attempt to assign an absolute value to a work of art falls heavily to the ground unless it is buttressed by the assumption that it is possible to find and use some "normal" and normally cultured man whose whole temperament, experience, and knowledge have been standardized, and whose apperception of the work to be judged may therefore be identified with the work itself. But men do differ; and this standard man who may be taken to represent the whole of humanity at its best is, of course, always that particular man, the individual absolutist himself.

Thus at the very beginning of any attempt to find an absolute standard by which to judge a work of art we are met by something relative in its value—the relativity of a jest to the ear for which it is destined. And the further we go the more clearly we shall realize that at every step in our analysis we come upon some further relativity, so that, for example, the value of a work of art is relative, not only to the individual, but to the stage which he has reached in his individual development. No sensitive person who recalls the history of the evolution of his own taste can fail to remember how at one time he was dazzled by certain writers, Shelley, for example, from whom (so far as he is concerned) the glory now seems to have departed; though it is doubtless still visible to others. It was once there because he perceived it. It is still there because others still see it. But it is no longer there *for him*. And again there is no escape from this relativity of judgment unless some arbitrary norm is established. Certain writers we know are appropriate to youth and certain others to age, but how shall we judge them absolutely? Surely the very oldest man yet unburied is not the most completely infallible, and it is surely difficult to say which one of the seven ages of man sees things most truly.

Nor is it, moreover, possible to consider the value of a work of art wholly apart from the society which forms its audience, though we need not, to be sure, overestimate either the rapidity or the completeness with which societies change. Dante was a great *man,* and by virtue of that fact much more conspicuously like than unlike a citizen of the twentieth century. The best book is not necessarily the newest or superficially the most pertinent. But if there is any connection whatever between literature and those more or less variable sensibilities, aspirations, and convictions which give their peculiar character to social groups, then the value of any particular work *for* that group must be in part relative *to* that group, and it is difficult to imagine how any judge can wholly detach himself from the group to which he belongs. The conscious urgency of the need which certain contemporaries feel for absolute standards in criticism was not, apparently, felt by the generation of critics against whose relativism they are rebelling; and hence their desire to establish such absolutes must constitute one of the characteristics which make their writings particularly valuable to their group.

Works of art are constructions serving to arrange fragments of observation and experience into patterns which are pleasing because they are understandable in terms of human thought and consistent in terms of human feeling. To a greater or less degree these patterns are usually influenced by the criticism of human experience as a whole, and for this reason they tend to represent some sort of compromise between the author's vision of "reality" and those aspirations, desires, and hopes which determine his temperament. Hence such works embody something of what this group believes concerning the universe in which it lives, while, at the same time, they both reflect and influence those particular desires, perceptions, emotions, and emphases which give to the human consciousness at any time its peculiar character.

But if all these things are true, then the central error of those who insist upon setting up absolute standards of judgment for literature is the error vulgarly known as putting the cart before the horse, of assuming that we can know what literature *ought* to be without knowing just what man and nature and God *are*. Of any particular work we may say that it represents nature as thus or so. We may say also that it is a construction gratifying to certain desires, likely to develop certain sensibilities, or even tending to encourage a certain kind of conduct. But to judge it absolutely is to maintain that one knows not only what nature is, but also which desires are legitimate, what conduct is permissible, and what sensibilities were, are, or ever could be capable of contributing valuable elements to the general experience of living. Perhaps the blind disciple of some minutely and dogmatically all-inclusive religion, perhaps the subscriber to the provisions of some inconceivably exhaustive Koran or Talmud, might venture to rank works of art in a hierarchy which he would pronounce eternally fixed. But no one else consistently could, and such a Koran or Talmud does not exist, because even the best-codified faiths permit differences of opinion and judgment concerning some of those subtle shades with which literature is frequently concerned. A dogmatically established criterion for the judgment of art presupposes dogmas which have previously settled every conceivable question concerning science, religion, philosophy, and morals.

Perhaps the poet may—perhaps the poet must—forget the logical necessity of skepticism. It is his business to devise constructions, and such constructions always involve premises which can become acceptable only if they are asserted with a confident faith. But if the critic is to be distinguished from the creator, if he is to maintain even the relative detachment and objectivity which make his art more like the art of the scientist or the philosopher than it is like the art of the poet, then this critic is bound to recognize both the element of arbitrariness in any work of art and the fact that the value of the construction made possible by this arbitrary element is relative to the audience that will contemplate it.

The proponents of "standards" are fond of arguing that without them the critic becomes no better than that "stringed lute" of Oscar Wilde's upon which—and with disastrous results—"all winds could play." In his hands criticism degenerates into the random impression, and what he

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produces is only a derivative work of art based upon the drama or poem or tale which he is pretending to criticize. By insisting upon the duty of the critic to judge, they propose to give him a function superior to that of mere pale re-creation; and that purpose is laudable enough, but it is hardly worth while to achieve it at the cost of making him believe that he—of all people—should be the one to attempt that most stupendous of all creative acts, which consists in establishing by a fiat of the imagination some absolute standard of value.

The imagination which creates works of art is, after all, not the most powerful sort of imagination. To a greater or less extent such works always include an element of confessed make-believe, and to a greater or less extent they always recognize some distinction between the kind of "poetic faith" which they seek to inspire and that simple "faith" which is inspired by religions and philosophies. Hence the poet who calls himself "poet" and the romancer who calls himself "romancer" have neither the presumption nor the effectiveness of the poet who calls himself "prophet" or of the romancer who gets himself accepted as the revealer of some system of law or duty or morals. Hence to insist that the critic should come forth with some series of absolutes is a very strange way of preventing him from meddling with the business of "creating," since "standards" of any kind are, as a matter of fact, the supreme achievements of the creative imagination. Doubtless he should guard himself against the tendency to rest content with a merely lyrical account of his "impressions," but it is, on the other hand, when he sets up standards or proposes absolutes that he is most clearly and most actively forsaking the effort to criticize for the effort to create.

Premier Azaña on Spanish Policy

By I. M. LEVY

Madrid, December 10

ALL Spain was aware of the fact that its first President would be Alcalá Zamora, and that Manuel Azaña, former Provisional President, would be given a position of importance. He has now been chosen Premier. Azaña is one of the three pivotal men in Spain at the present moment, and for that reason the declarations which he made in an interview with the present writer are of great interest as reflecting future policy.

Having in mind the ultimatum handed to the government by the Sindicato Nacional Ferroviario, demanding action within fifteen days, under the threat of a general railroad strike, with reference to the critical situation of the railroad employees, I first asked Premier Azaña about the course the government would take in this matter. He replied that the nationalization of the railroads was an immediate necessity owing to the national exigency, inefficient operation, and the ruinous competition resulting from the existence of half a dozen major lines, and that the efforts of the government in the near future would be directed toward this end. Whether or not the demands of the railroad men for increased wages could be satisfied under government operation, with a Treasury deficit of some 237,000,000 pesetas, and the heavy drains of the more immediate agrarian and educational reforms, would be difficult to say. Asked whether the nationalization of the railroads might be construed as the first step toward the socialization of other public utilities, the Premier gave it as his opinion that Spain was not as yet ripe for such a procedure, although the general tendency of the future would certainly be in that direction, as provided for in the constitution. The fundamental social legislation embodied in the constitution, relating to the condition of the working classes, would be amplified as rapidly as possible.

Speaking of Spain's economic relations with the rest of the world, Premier Azaña expressed his regret at the trend which the economic policy of other nations is at present taking. To him it seems lamentable that, when the world crisis is calling for measures of a distinctly opposite nature, nations should be involving themselves in retaliatory tariff measures and economic reprisals. The backward state of industry in Spain demands a certain amount of protection, but every effort will be made to reduce this to the minimum compatible with the nation's economic welfare. Spain cannot remain indifferent to the economic tendencies of other nations, and must naturally, for her own safety, adjust herself to these. But in no case will she take the aggressive, and she will lend her whole-hearted support to any movement giving promise of remedying existing conditions. Thus, when France recently imposed prohibitive rates on the importation of Spanish wines, the Spanish government, before considering retaliatory measures, entered into negotiations leading toward a more desirable *modus vivendi,* which, if leaving much to be desired in the commercial relations of the two countries, has at least succeeded in bettering them.

Plans for agrarian reform, which constitutes one of the gravest and most perplexing problems the government must face, have already been drawn up, and the government has pledged not only its technical aid but also financial assistance, in so far as the resources of the Treasury will permit. The desperate situation of the Andalusian peasants is a result of the land abuses and absentee landlordism of the monarchy. The coming of the republic gave them new hope. It was believed that the land which had for so long been denied to them was now to be apportioned among them, giving them the opportunity to raise themselves from a state of virtual serfdom to the self-respect and well-being which is their right. Unfortunately, miracles cannot be performed overnight; the agrarian problem is of long standing, and the government has found itself in this short time unable to make any great headway toward fulfilling the promise which it means to keep. But headway must be made, for neglect or delay in attacking this problem will have disastrous consequences for the welfare of the people and the stability of the republic, as is indicated by the discontent in the south.

The question of the relations of church and state has definitely been resolved. Except for isolated attacks from certain sections of the press and the short-lived demonstra-

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tions of the Basque country, there was no opposition to the anti-clerical legislation of the constitution, and there was every support for it. The danger of civil war is unmistakably past. There now only remains the drawing up of complementary laws to the articles of the constitution to determine more specifically their execution, particularly with regard to the religious orders and the expropriation of their goods. At the present moment the secularization of the cemeteries is being effected by the Cortes, and this is but an elementary phase of the question as a whole.

The external relations with the rest of the world into which Spain will enter may be summed up in her complete cooperation with the League of Nations and her unreserved support of its activities and decisions. A clause to that effect has already been inserted in the fundamental law, for the first time in history, and its insertion was no mere gesture. Spain believes in the League as being the one organized means of promoting harmony and good-will among the nations of the world, and is determined to adhere to it under any and all circumstances. Otherwise, the internal problems which confront the government will impede, for the moment at least, the participation of Spain in international affairs to any great extent. This does not imply, however, the continuance of the isolation which marked her history prior to the republic. The intention of the Spanish republic to foster in every way possible the promotion of world peace cannot be too strongly emphasized.

Questioned as to the future status of the army, for so long the predominating factor in Spanish politics, Premier Azaña took on the semblance of a father contemplating a favorite child. The military reforms which he instituted soon after taking up the duties of Minister of War were approved too recently by the Cortes to permit of their full and necessary explanation. Obviously, the army as a state within a state has been eliminated and reduced to its proper proportion in the national defense. In addition, it has been made much more compact and efficient than was the case under the monarchy. But Spain is still carrying on her back "the corpse of an army," with insufficient equipment and suited only for internal service as an auxiliary to the police and the Civil Guard. As an instrument of national defense against foreign aggression (now, fortunately, remote) it is not to be considered. The Cortes must decide whether the Spanish army is to continue in its present state, with capacity only for dealing with internal disturbances, or become an army in fact as well as name. In the former case, it must follow the matter through to its logical conclusion by making the army an adjunct of the civil police forces; in the latter, it must appropriate the necessary funds to raise it to a state of adequate efficiency in relation to other armies. In bringing this question to the Cortes Azaña will not be actuated by militaristic tendencies. The function of the army will be merely that of supporting a necessary national policy. Spain will adapt its military forces to those of the rest of the world. Any move toward disarmament will find in the republic one of its most eager champions and firmest adherents, in theory and in practice. On the other hand, should foreign nations make no effort to limit or reduce their military programs, Spain, unwillingly, will be forced to plan her own accordingly. In the meantime, her needs will be more than satisfied by the minimum efficient army essential to her foreign policy.

In the Driftway

THE old proverb told us that the devil found mischief for idle hands. It is probably more true to say that idle hands are of no use, eventually, even to the devil. They remain folded and useless, and their owners suffer from what is certainly man's worst disease—inability to be occupied, either with hand or mind. In England, where large numbers of persons have been out of work for literally the years of their adult life, this important fact is being realized. In the London *Times* the Drifter reads of the activities of the Society of Friends along these lines. In various areas where work has been unobtainable for a long time, clubs have been started which are in reality workshops for the workless. Materials and tools are provided; erstwhile carpenters can turn out small objects of household use or even articles of furniture; cobblers can make shoes or mend old ones—in some cases the worn shoes of children whose fathers are out of work. The workers actually construct the club for themselves; they make the benches and tables, the shelves and chairs, they plaster and paint the walls. They repair broken utensils from their own homes, they devise all sorts of makeshift articles from strange materials. "A man who was fitting oak fronts to the drawers of a desk said that the pieces were waste from coffin lids bought for a few pence from an undertaker."

* * * * *

IT is hardly necessary to add that once the idea of possible work gets abroad in a neighborhood, the clubs are highly successful and the workers come simply because it is "more fun to be occupied than not." They understand that they will receive no pay for their work, but they may give the articles they make to whom they will. Attendance is voluntary. Once the idea of simply working to keep busy is accepted, the workers exercise considerable ingenuity in making tools to proceed with. In one club "a blower for a portable forge has been made out of the treadle of an old sewing machine and a round toffee tin fitted with an impeller made in the shop, and it is connected with the forge by a length of railway-coupling tube retrieved from the scrap heap." The forge will weld iron, and the skilled workers use it for making tools.

* * * * *

THE moral of this tale is plain enough. Man must work. If he has lost his job, if his mind is worried by considerations of rent day with no money, young ones with no shoes, babies without milk, a house with no coal to warm it, he must inevitably welcome occupation even if it is without monetary reward. If it serves to keep his hand in with his old trade, against a happier day, all the better. If it provides necessary utensils for his wife or patched shoes for his children, better still. But mainly he must work. He must keep a tool in his hand and his mind on the fruits of his toil or he is no longer a man. When the Drifter hears frivolous persons declare that an able-bodied man would rather stand on a bread line than do an honest day's labor, he becomes excessively angry. The curse of the human race, if you like, is that it cannot be idle. Or perhaps this is

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only the curse of the Western races. In the East it seems possible for a man to sit still and contemplate nothing with complete satisfaction to himself and to his neighbors. We have not learned that happy art. The Drifter has often laughed at those persons who, unexpectedly inheriting a fortune, announce that tomorrow will see them back at the old desk. Perhaps this is something more than a desire to impress the world with their fidelity to their tasks, or with their carelessness of riches. Perhaps they cannot think of anything else to do; and the thought of doing nothing is intolerable.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Lincoln the Bolshevik

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: Talk about censorship! A Hollywood, California, newspaper cut out a phrase from the words of Abraham Lincoln. A letter from a subscriber contained the following quotation: "This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it or their revolutionary right of overthrowing it." These words are from Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, but the local newspaper cut out the words "or their revolutionary right of overthrowing it."

Hollywood, Cal., December 12 JEAN ELLIS

Grandi's *Mot Juste*

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: In your issue of December 9 you praise Signor Grandi for having "coined" one phrase which you would like to see "framed and displayed in every Foreign Office": "We must fortify justice and not justify force"—an excellent formula, for which, I am sure, Signor Grandi would give credit to Pascal, who stated that it is necessary that "ce qui est juste soit fort ou ce qui est fort soit juste." The whole sentence will be found in a repertory of classical quotations which has just appeared in Paris under the title "Les Citations Françaises" and which I unblushingly recommend to some of my fellow-readers of *The Nation.*

Ithaca, N. Y., December 21 OTHON GUERLAC

In Short, We Disagree

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: I received your circular letter of October 23. I read and reread it several times and took occasion to read portions of your program to a number of representative travelers and others and discussed some of the subjects and especially your panaceas for a "better United States." I found none who favored more than a single one of your proposals.

Free trade? All agreed that would spell ruin to labor and business generally, flood our markets with the products of cheap foreign labor, throw our American workingmen out of their jobs, and reduce our standard of living to the foreign level.

National support for the unemployed? Vote the money raised by taxes paid by all the people at large for a special class, encourage idleness, support the improvident, and reverse the purpose and functions of government which require the people to maintain their institutions and pay the expenses of government.

Disarm completely? Let the rabble and mob seize the government and run it at will. Reasonable reduction of armaments is desirable so as to reduce expenses and taxes but to be without any navy and army? Only unthinking visionaries seriously advocate this.

Not protect our nationals and their property the world over? Of what value is American citizenship if our citizens are not protected in their rights and liberties abroad? Let them be slaughtered like rats? Why should the United States care what becomes of our people and their rights and property when outside the United States? Leave them to their fate, would you? Allow the people of Haiti, Nicaragua, and so on, to run amuck? What care we so we are safe at home? The United States has troops abroad for a laudable purpose, for the protection of Americans and the welfare of the people themselves in the countries involved, who are generally incapable of maintaining order.

Form a new radical party? Made up of all misfits and incompetents? Seize the wealth of the successful? Distribute it among the proletariat and confiscate by taxation all big fortunes? Take over the railroads, utilities, and industries? Public ownership has been shown to be more expensive and less efficient than private.

Your program is, indeed, a wise one from the standpoint of the Communist, loafer, and improvident. But it would destroy individualism, the incentive to labor, and would reduce all to the level of the unsuccessful and worthless.

You can see *The Nation* and myself do not agree upon many fundamentals. I have read your publication in the past but it does not appeal to me. I can find more satisfaction and more profitable reading elsewhere from my viewpoint.

Denison, Iowa, November 19 CARL F. KIRCHNER

Still Pertinent

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: You will enjoy the pertinence of the following passage. It is from an address by the Honorable William D. Kelley, delivered about the year 1850 before the Linnaean Society of Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg, on the "Characteristics of the Age."

> The spirit of commerce is essentially selfish. Voyages are projected for profit. The merchant, whose liberal gifts surprise the world, chaffers in his bargains. . . . Wealth increases; but its aggregation into few hands takes place with ever-growing rapidity. The comforts of life abound; but when the markets of the world are glutted, hunger is in the home of the artisan. Overproduction causes the legitimate effects of famine. The ingenuity of political economists is vainly taxed for the means of preventing the accumulation of surplus materials and fabrics. And while warehouse and factory groan with repletion, heartless theory points to the laboring population reduced to want and pauperism, and with dogmatic emphasis inquires if the increase of population cannot be legally restrained. The state of the market shows that there are more men than commerce requires, and a just system of economy would adapt the supply to the demand.

The Honorable William D. Kelley was a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas at Philadelphia, devoted (the man, not the court) to "the protection of the weak and downtrodden, the reformation of the ignorant and vicious, and the promotion of education." He became a member of Congress in 1860.

East Orange, N. J., November 10 A. G. BARNETT

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Books for Commonwealth

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: Probably every reader of *The Nation* has at least a few worth-while books which he ought to dispose of because he needs the space which they take for new books. At Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansas, the students do industrial work for four hours a day for their maintenance; the rest of the time they attend classes and study or read. They have no funds with which to buy books, and so they are dependent for their study upon gifts of books from generous friends.

Perhaps the readers of *The Nation* might care to join the ranks of our generous friends and add new volumes to our library. Nowhere would books be more intelligently read and more deeply appreciated than at Commonwealth.

Mena, Ark., November 16 George Yeisley Rusk

Chicago Readers

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: I should like to get in touch with *Nation* readers and other liberals in and around Chicago who would be interested in joining a group for informal discussion of current problems. My address is 5121 University Avenue; telephone, Midway 0517.

Chicago, January 1 Lester A. Leserman

Holiday Greetings

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: The "trimming" you gave the "Crowded Days" of McAdoo was worth the subscription cost of *The Nation* for ten years. *The Nation* has been better the past six months than ever before, and I intend that comparison as a high compliment. More power to you!

Madison, Wis., December 23 Alfred T. Rogers

Contributors to This Issue

Louis Fischer, Moscow correspondent of *The Nation*, is the author of "Why Recognize Russia?"

A. E. Hindmarsh is assistant dean of Harvard University.

Paul Y. Anderson is the national correspondent of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*.

Harold J. Laski is professor of political science at London University.

I. M. Levy is engaged in research work at the Central University of Madrid.

Frances M. Frost is the author of a book of verse, "Blue Harvest."

Carey McWilliams, a Californian, is the author of "Ambrose Bierce."

Gerald Sykes is a writer of fiction.

Abram L. Harris, professor of economics at Howard University, is coauthor of "The Black Worker."

Lionel Trilling is at work on a critical study of Matthew Arnold.

William Seagle is an assistant editor of the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences.

Finance

Aid or Prevention?

Proposals are before Congress, in the form of bills or otherwise, to substitute government credit for private credit at a number of weak points in the country's economic structure. Government credit, judged by its going rate of about 4¼ per cent, is good, while private credit on the whole is somewhat worse than dubious, if we gauge it by the large number of railway and other bonds, regarded not long ago as first class, which are now selling to yield 10 per cent and more. The plan is, in this period of stress and strain, to employ government funds to meet emergencies and, if possible, to set the wheels of business to moving at a more rapid rate.

The money outlay in connection with the plans which are being considered at Washington runs into large figures. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation will apparently call for a Treasury subscription of half a billion dollars. The banks for discounting real-estate mortgages, if they are set up, will involve some $150,000,000, according to preliminary estimates. An additional investment of $100,000,000 of federal funds is scheduled for the existing land banks. Here is a total of three-quarters of a billion dollars.

Now, government credit is an extremely sensitive thing. Ordinarily it does not register its fluctuating position in the market with movements of five or ten points, like a common-stock "equity," but with trivial changes of eighths and quarters, which nevertheless convey their meaning emphatically to the initiated. It would, perhaps, be instructive if those who toss off proposals for casual billions of government bond issues to pull us out of the depression would note and interpret some of the things which have recently occurred in the bond market.

In connection with its December 15 financing, the Treasury offered $600,000,000 of one-year 3¼ per cent notes, $300,000,000 of six-months 2¾ per cent certificates, and $400,000,000 of nine-months 3 per cent certificates. Of this total of $1,300,000,000, the "new money" received from investors amounted to about $300,000,000, the balance being paid for with outstanding Treasury obligations which had matured or been called in. Less than a week after these issues had been placed on the market, the two longer-term maturities were selling below par. The most recent issue of long-term bonds—$800,000,000 of 3 per cents, 1951-55, sold last September—has recently changed hands below 87.

In the fiscal year ended last June, the Treasury deficit footed up at $902,000,000. Next June there will be another shortage estimated at $2,123,000,000, and in the June following still another of $1,417,000,000. These are merely estimates; the actual results may be less—or greater. None of the projects in aid of industry now under consideration has been budgeted; prospective deficits are to be increased by the amounts appropriated.

These rather somber facts are here placed in evidence, not with the idea of proving that the government cannot or should not intervene to avert a serious situation, but to demonstrate that the federal Treasury is not a gold mine and that it behooves private enterprise to stir itself more vigorously in the direction of self-help. Our existing troubles will eventually be overcome, in one way or another; but when we consider the amazing extent to which it is proposed that government help be invoked, can anyone seriously doubt that a more profitable exercise of government powers would consist in the relentless suppression of an incipient boom, through the banking system or otherwise?

S. Palmer Harman

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Books, Music, Films, Drama

Sunrise

By FRANCES M. FROST

Dark in the world's great morning, this mountain rose
Carved in wind, striking the weightless air
With plunging granite.

Now at the gradual close
Of the shadowless hours, when the strange high stars
Diminish and the earth moves into dawn
Slowly, this mountain, bare,
Sharp to the light, is, in the yellow skies,
Carved fiercely out.

And when the night has gone,
Is broken beneath deep sunlight poured upon
Forced westward from the bright and blowing meadows,
Driven from grooves in hills where the green waters
Descend with stony voice,

When the imperishable fire
Of morning rises above the mountain, the heart's despair
Is vanquished, the uncrying throat
The tall, glad body, the brow, the windy hair,
Which, like this mountain, are graven in luminous air.

Bret Harte

Bret Harte: Argonaut and Exile. By George R. Stewart, Jr. Houghton Mifflin Company. $5.

THIRTY-ONE years have passed since the death of Bret Harte. During this period his reputation has been dealt with rather carelessly by a number of hands. Merwin and Pemberton published biographies, and Mr. Boynton added a rather sour sketch. George Stewart, however, has written the first real "life" of Harte, and it is a book that will not be easily supplanted. In addition to being an excellent account of Harte's life, it is a model of biographical writing. Mr. Stewart has not been a close student of biography for nothing (he is giving a course on the subject this year at the University of California). "Bret Harte" is a biography in the traditional sense, and in its orderly presentation of fact and sane rationalization one will search in vain for the murky profundities of psychoanalytical "interpretation." Such a volume as Mr. Stewart's justifies the old notion that the first function of a biography is to tell the story of a human life and not to prove a thesis.

Mr. Stewart's survey of Harte's life is carefully balanced; no one period or influence is given disproportionate consideration. Harte's life falls rather naturally into three major divisions: boyhood, the California period from 1854 to 1871, and the period from 1871 until his death. The years that Harte spent in California embrace the best of his life—the beginning and end of his career as a writer. The chapters devoted to this period are of particular interest and importance. Harte's career after 1871 was strangely anti-climactic. Indeed, Mr. Stewart senses this himself, for he states that the chief problem with Harte is to account for the rise of his creative power in the sixties and its abrupt decline in the seventies. Harte, however, seems to have dated his career from the time that he visited W. D. Howells in Boston, when he was paraded as a romantic Western writer of mysterious antecedents. Thoroughly enjoying the remarkable reception that was given him in the East, Harte did nothing to dissipate the legends about his past.

Bostonians should have realized that a dandy who wore green kid gloves when he lectured was, at best, but a histrionic Westerner. Harte was not a pioneer, nor a forty-niner. He followed his mother to California in 1854, and seems to have been chaperoned on the voyage by his sister. He lived under the protecting wing of his mother in Oakland for a number of years, evincing little interest or curiosity in the life about him and devoting himself very largely to Dickens. It is extremely doubtful, despite Mr. Stewart's gallant conjuring of possible proof, that he ever visited "the diggin's." This revelation will infuriate an entire generation of local historians in California who have mapped the Bret Harte country with marvelous latter-day precision and insight. Even after he began to contribute to the magazines it took Harte sixteen years to realize that there was anything to write about in California. He had just begun to tap this rich and unexploited field when, in 1871, his career was cut short by the disastrous success of a poem that he always disliked. With the success of "The Heathen Chinee," he disappeared "over the range" and did not return. He seems to have been eagerly waiting for a chance to escape; the trip East was like returning home after a long vacation. By that time, however, he had ceased to ridicule the pioneer and miner; they had become his stock-in-trade. Afterwards, he merely tried to remember California. Trying to remember California, in fact, became his business; his one lecture was "The Argonauts of '49," and the one always marketable story, the humorous yarn with a California background.

Harte's career was at an end by 1871. Prior to that he had written, while living in the West, the half-dozen stories and poems upon which his fame rests today. With the publication of "The Heathen Chinee," he became for a brief feverish season the most popular author in America; probably no other American author ever enjoyed such popularity. But the vein was soon exhausted. He had years of frightful anxiety with process-servers waiting for him in the wings of lecture auditoriums. It is slight wonder that he never returned to America after a minor appointment in the consular service took him to Europe.

Mr. Stewart's account of Harte's life is immensely readable, carefully constructed, and elaborately documented. His fine judgment and good sense about the important issues in Harte's life deserve unstinted praise. Few literary biographies of recent years are as satisfactory or as illuminating. But Mr. Stewart is too judicious. Having spent eight years of research on the facts, he still declines the responsibilities of interpretation. The lapse of thirty-one years is not "sufficient time" to warrant an evaluation of Harte's work. This reticence is unfortunate. The task of attempting to place a final value on Harte's work and of discussing the problems which it presents will probably be undertaken by a critic less qualified than Mr. Stewart. Of late years it has been the practice to dismiss Harte's work from careful consideration by some reference to its "sentimentality." But merely as an indication that a fresh examination of his work with reference to the period is needed, it might be pointed out that "sentimentality" is not its chief fault. The truth is that the miners and pioneers were rather sentimental. Harte's Three Partners are typical:

> They had risen, and standing in the doorway, by common consent turned their faces to the east. It was the frequent attitude of the ***home-remembering*** **miner.**

Clarence King wrote of California in the sixties that "pathos and humor so tenderly blent can rarely be found as here." He might well have been writing of the work of Bret Harte.

CAREY MCWILLIAMS

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R: Courage

Laugh and Lie Down. By Robert Cantwell. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.

ROBERT CANTWELL is twenty-three years old. Since this is his first novel to be published, the reviewer would seem to be expected to give a synopsis of the plot, congratulate him on the remarkable fluency of his style, point out a few flaws (if only to demonstrate the reviewer's acumen), and inform the reading public that Mr. Cantwell is "promising." Such is the standard procedure on these occasions. This time let us try to do something more.

The scene is Tacoma, Washington. In the background are run-down rented houses, rotgut whiskey, half-gratified lust, dance music, and second-hand roadsters, for the main characters are young people of college age who have had to go to work and who seek to shut out the drabness of poverty by an equally drab kind of "pleasure." The outer story concerns the jealousy that William McArdle feels of his brother Kenneth, who has taken his girl from him. Criticism cannot stop on the book's objective side, however, for this is shadowy, unrealized; we must penetrate to the inner story if we are to encounter flesh and blood. The author is but dimly aware of the inner story himself. His novel is not a conscious work of art but a groping self-revelation. The inner story is that of a modest, undersized boy, used to middle-class comfort and prestige, whose father dies when he is in college, obliging him to support his mother and sisters by working at night in a factory. It is a painful situation, made worse by sensibility. Before life has really begun the boy feels defeated and unnaturally tired out. The saddest part is that owing to his extreme youth and certain college-boy prejudices he cannot face the situation squarely and draw resolution and insight from it. He hides behind a literary snicker and wastes his sensibility in perfecting a patter that is simply an advanced form of "college humor." His whole life becomes an evasion by way of witticism and acquiescence. Apparently it would be a breach of his peculiar conventions to assert himself. If he doesn't want a drink but is told to "take one anyway," he takes one anyway. So he sits on in a dingy restaurant, unhappy, bored, frightened, superior, until he is drawn finally—or so the story runs—into crime, through sheer lack of will.

There is no question of Cantwell's talent. The grace with which he writes is precocious, but it is extraordinarily even and sustained. And he shows an exceptional refinement of the senses and fidelity to detail. At the root of his grace is modesty—the same modesty, by some law of retribution, that makes him the timid prey of convention. And convention is as much his foe in writing as it is William's in life. It has robbed his novel of backbone and individuality. There are no firm, clear outlines. Everything is like the end, which is blurred and indecisive.

But there is one hopeful note at the end, when William discovers his love for his brother and the girl. In that affirmative moment may lie the seed of future faith. Cantwell's career can be a heroic one, for he carries within him the possibility of both victory and defeat. Will he slip into that convenient refuge for the weary, the well-known "despair" of our war generation? His work already shows a dangerous lack of passion. But he belongs to a younger generation that has given evidence of a new strength.

Talent dies soon without passion. Unfortunately, whoever mentions faith in America is dismissed as a "mystic." Yet from a strictly literary standpoint it is plain that what Cantwell's work needs is just that. If he believed passionately in his "message," he would not waste so much cleverness on the exact recording of trivial conversations; his similes would cease to be more important than what they illustrate; the characters would not dissolve into one another; the milieu would not fade away; the real story would be seen and told. Cantwell has been given a precocious talent and a precocious handicap. With courage—and lots of time—the two can be fused and a valuable writer born.

GERALD SYKES

The Brown American

Brown America: The Story of a New Race. By Edwin R. Embree. The Viking Press. $2.50.

THIS book, as the subtitle explains, is a story of a new race in America. But its main thesis is not new to those who are acquainted with the work of Dr. Melville Herskovits—the thesis that the American Negro, cut off from his African background, has undergone serious biological transformation. In his veins is to be found "the blood of the principal branches of man—black, white, yellow-brown." In its cultural outlook and make-up the race is also new. It has taken over almost all "the white stereotypes in religion, in labor and business, and in social organization."

While in large measure an exposition of the assimilation of the Negro to Occidental culture, the book reveals the policy which guides one of the large wealthy foundations in its relation to the welfare of a minority whose future is still a perplexing problem. The author, Edwin R. Embree, is eminently fitted to handle these subjects. He is a grandson of John G. Fee, Kentucky abolitionist and founder of Berea College, for the "co-education of the races," where Mr. Embree received a part of his early education. He is also president of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, almost the whole of whose income is devoted to Negro welfare, and as such speaks not only from first-hand observation of Negro aspiration and achievement, but as one who actually influences the drift of Negro life by virtue of his discretionary power in giving or withholding financial support to this cause or that.

According to Mr. Embree, the Negro's first contribution to American life was the part played by his labor power in developing capitalism in the new world. In politics, where his record is somewhat besmirched by the corruption widespread at the height of his power in the post-Civil War South, he served the nation by giving the South its first adequate public schools, and by opening the ballot box and the jury system to white men formerly debarred by property qualifications. In more recent times the Negro's colorful folkways and his other-worldly spiritual simplicity have caused a world made prosaic by business discipline to scintillate with new life; and his mirth and joy of living expressed in jazz music and the tap dance have broken the spell of the machine. Although restricted to occasional and side-entrance association with white intellectuals, Negro poets, artists, essayists, and scholars have given evidence of the black man's genius. Despite their handicaps the brown Americans have shown slight susceptibility to radical ideas. The only radicalism to which any appreciable number of them have given assent is the civil libertarianism of W. E. B. Du Bois. As the radicalism of this school is nothing more than the political aspect of those natural-rights preconceptions that stirred the bourgeoisie in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Mr. Embree accepts it along with its economic ideology of thrift, private enterprise, and ownership as advocated by Booker T. Washington, the conservative leader in Negro social thought.

Mr. Embree feels that because of the Negro's accomplishments the Anglo-Saxon's sense of fair play and noblesse oblige should make for steady improvement in Negro living conditions. The mortality of Negroes should be lowered through adequate

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hospitalization, medical education, and better sanitation. Greater provision should be made for Negro secondary and collegiate education. This work must take place largely in Southern States, where the Rosenwald Fund has already placed large sums for such purposes. Above all Mr. Embree thinks that Jim-Crowism and segregation must be gradually abandoned, if for no other reason than the exorbitant cost of maintaining a dual system of public welfare, especially in the South where it can be least afforded. He is, therefore, for admitting Negroes into free and spontaneous association with white people of like attainment. But right here there seems to be a conflict between what the author thinks desirable as an ideal, on the one hand, and as workable social policy, on the other.

Unique in this scheme of racial advancement inaugurated and financed by the Rosenwald Fund is the plan to establish four Negro university centers in the South. These institutions are to do graduate work, research, and award the advanced degrees. While it may be allowed that the separate college will be indefinitely necessary in the undergraduate training of Negro students in the South, the creation of Negro universities, involving the expenditure of millions of dollars, can be justified neither by special cultural considerations nor by social policy. So far as the reviewer has observed, no move has been initiated to eliminate Negro students from the first-rate Northern universities. And if such a move is under way, it should afford many of the Negro's friends an excellent opportunity to demonstrate with deeds their professed belief in "equal rights." If we are to build separate institutions as a means of shielding a social minority from the rebuffs and hurts commonly inflicted by the dominant majority, or of conciliating majority and minority, this institutional segregation that Mr. Embree himself says is uneconomic will go on ad infinitum, becoming more elaborate and pointless in its duplication of effort. Moreover, if these Negro graduate schools are to be something more than provincial fact-finding centers, it will take many years to equip them with adequate libraries, research materials and documents, and a personnel of eminent scholars, who are rare even in the great Northern universities. Granting that this is not a herculean task, it seems to the reviewer that the plan is hopelessly extravagant and serves no other purpose than the further intellectual segregation of the races. Instead of extending the boundaries of educational separation, the existing Negro colleges should be made into institutions of the highest undergraduate caliber, such as the old Atlanta University, Virginia Union University, and the old Fisk University were on the road toward becoming before they were smitten with research fever, professional education, and the itch to confer the advanced degrees.

ABRAM L. HARRIS

Two Novelized Biographies

The Marvellous Boy. By Ernst Penzoldt. Translated by John J. Trounstine and Eleanor Woolf. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

Special Hunger. The Tragedy of Keats. By George O'Neil. Horace Liveright. $2.50.

THE heyday of the novelized biography seems to have passed. No more "Ariels" or "Glorious Apollos" head the best-seller list. But the genre, if it is no longer preeminent and profitable, has fully intrenched itself. It has settled down to complacent mediocrity and its production is now as established an industry as detective fiction. It is out of this mediocrity that these lives of Chatterton and Keats have come.

Ernst Penzoldt seeks to relieve his mediocrity by violence. He ruthlessly invents where the store of biographical fact is slim, filling in with whopping incidents of high-class melodramatic eroticism and the absurd trappings of the terror novels. He is perfectly willing to pervert the facts, and completely misrepresents Chatterton's parents. Anachronisms do not make him flinch—his eighteenth-century tipplers mix their brandy with uninvented soda water. In explanation of this mad and disagreeable farrago, the author with mild effrontery tells us that he has but followed Chatterton in mingling "the probable with the true"!

From the charge of invention George O'Neil is certainly free. Indeed, he veers to the opposite pole from that of Penzoldt and uses only the most commonly known facts in the life of Keats. Mr. O'Neil has a considerable reputation as a poet, and in the light of this it is a little difficult to explain the unimaginative dulness of his biography. His attempts to recreate the social circles in which the poet moved are far from convincing—the rich material of the Leigh Hunt menage is slighted; Haydon becomes but a lay figure. The whole scene, so full of possibilities, is dull and lifeless, and, worst of all, Keats himself emerges as merely limp and sorrowful, not at all the essentially masculine and self-reliant person that his letters and the latest and fullest biographies indicate. Beside the quotations from the poems and the letters which it includes, the whole book becomes utterly feeble, and Mr. O'Neil's attempt to show how "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" was composed becomes a rather unpleasant travesty.

LIONEL TRILLING

The Paper Constitution

The Written Constitution and the Unwritten Attitude. By Charles Edward Merriam. Richard R. Smith. $1.

THE three lectures delivered by Professor Merriam at the University of Rochester which are now issued in printed form constitute an interesting and stimulating little book, although its basic argument is neither entirely new nor entirely valid. In the present twilight of constitutionalism political scientists have become particularly aware of the extent to which usage has interstitially modified, if not transformed, the American Constitution. Apart from its amendments, the Constitution of 1931 is certainly not the same as that of 1789. But the Constitution still needs to undergo profound changes if it is to be adapted to the economic and political needs of industrialized twentieth-century America, and Professor Merriam, sensing this need, urges us in effect not so much to attempt to change the fundamental law as to disregard it. The Constitution has not yet reached the limits of its possible expansion. It was a profoundly revolutionary document when it was written, and we shall only be following tradition if under it revolutionary changes are wrought in the future. Professor Merriam all but asks: "What is the Constitution among friends?" when he invites us to contemplate the changes a Socialist government would be able to introduce under it even in its present form. Surely this is subversive doctrine to be preached by a respectable political scientist. In fact, it constitutes plain nullification.

I find the provocative mood of Professor Merriam very sympathetic. His words are brave and comforting in the present season of discontent. But I am afraid that they are due not so much to reason as to justifiable impatience with the rigidity of the amending process provided by the Fathers. Instead of succumbing to the hopelessness which has generally been inspired by the experience with the Eighteenth Amendment, he beats a muffled tocsin of revolt. But was the Constitution, even when it was first framed, really a revolutionary document? Professor Merriam disposes of such scholars as J. Allen Smith and Charles Beard, who have contended that the Constitution was erected as a bulwark of conservative interests, by arguing that it was revolutionary when compared to the forms of government

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prevailing in European countries in the late eighteenth century. No doubt this is true, but the question is whether it was revolutionary intrinsically. I am afraid the answer must be in the negative. The conservatism of the Fathers is perhaps most convincingly shown by the very fact that they made it impossible to amend the Constitution except by a most cumbersome process, the essence of which was the rejection of majority decision, everywhere supposed to be the basis of democratic rule. The "unwritten attitudes" can thus get themselves expressed only with the greatest difficulty, when it is a question of introducing fundamental changes. Indeed, in the end, Professor Merriam is forced to admit that responsible cabinet government could not be introduced without the aid of specific constitutional amendments. But is that not tantamount to admitting that there is now no effective way of articulating public opinion even with respect to those changes which do not require constitutional amendments? So far as political science is concerned, the logical solution would seem to be in the amendment of the amending process itself. This, of course, would have to overcome the constitutional obstacles which any amendment would have to meet, but the issue would at least be fundamental. If, in some great period of unrest, constitutional changes should be discovered to be all but impossible, the Constitution may have to be disregarded even as the Articles of Confederation were in 1789. In other words, there will occur at least a bloodless revolution.

The most searching and also the soundest part of Professor Merriam's observations seems to me to be his second lecture, entitled Nation, State, and City Under the Constitution, which interprets in terms of constitutional principles the coming of age of our megalopolitan civilization. Political scientists as a rule still think in terms of States versus federal power, and mouth the outworn shibboleths of State or federal rights. Professor Merriam has a vivid realism on his side when he contends that the real struggle is rather between city and national rights. Our politically underrepresented and disfranchised cities are perhaps the best illustration of the extent to which constitutional limitations can repress natural political forces. Professor Merriam envisages the possibility of the formation of new States out of some of the great metropolitan areas. But when their terrific economic power is considered, it is perhaps just as well that they remain in at least a partial state of political vassalage.

WILLIAM SEAGLE

Books in Brief

Cross Country. By Solon R. Barber. The Hague, Holland: The Servire Press, Ltd.

This miscellany of prose sketches and poems has amazing vitality. The writer is possessed of striking individuality in observation and a unique command of rhythm. He can be objective or subjective at will. He may have learned a good deal from E. E. Cummings, but he has learned more from accurate observation of places and people and from attempting to interpret, almost entirely through rhythm, what he saw and felt in these places and people. Barber produces definitely contemporaneous patterns: he catches the rhythm of a speakeasy, a romance, Havana, a group of Negroes, Vera Cruz—people together, or people alone, himself alone—anything he touches. He realizes everything he sees emotionally. At times one catches this poet employing the imagist technique, but he is too much the individualist to stay within such rigid limits. He turns a perfect sonnet easily too, and after his own manner. But for the most part his talent is at its best when he is playing with interpretative rhythms, rhythms which convey the sense of the things directly. He employs repetition to great advantage:

> Raise your dear face from your arms and listen:
> I tell you all the stones of the past have spoken,
> The wind is blowing, the wind is here.
> There are tears in your eyes, your eyes are lonely,
> Your eyes are Athens, your arms Troy.

In subject matter and in philosophy Solon Barber is a modern. His theme is chaos, but a jazz chaos scintillating with color and lights.

Sparks Fly Upward. By Oliver La Farge. Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50.

The atmospheric content of this second novel by last year's Pulitzer prize-winner could sustain the actions of the characters if the characters were of any weight; but the young Indian who grows up detached from his ancestral traditions in a household really alien to him, and finally breaks away from the household and its lovely young mistress to become a brilliant general in a revolution, is too unemphatic, too simplified. There is a sufficient complexity in the events of the novel; but the characters are only names and descriptions of their supposed actions. They generate a charm—the young Indian particularly seems to have a gentle masculine charm—and this may very well be owing to the smoothness with which the novel is written. The novel, in fact, is too smoothly written; it flows over the characters with amazing calm and is never upheaved by any of their emotions, which, if the words are believed, are often violent and extreme.

Hester Craddock. By Alyse Gregory. Longmans, Green and Company. $2.

Laid in the English downs, this is the tale of the interrelationships of two sisters and two men who are their neighbors. Both men love one sister who is amiable, innocent, kind, and lovely; the other sister, a neurotic with well-developed delusions of persecution, loves one of the men. The other is a hunchback whom no woman can ever love. Miss Gregory has contrived her situation intelligently and she writes with decorum and with a smooth, controlled style. Her protagonist, Hester, presents a problem which is most of the time too much for her. Hester is almost continually insane, first desperate with melancholy, then equally desperate with tenderness. To depict such a character convincingly requires the highest sort of novelistic power. Miss Gregory is more successful with Nelly, who is quite credibly lovable and good. The hunchback, in his malice and his pitiful need of love, is sharp and clear. But the whole story has a foggy, unreal quality, as if its author had not quite grasped it and pinned it down.

Red Like Crimson. By Jane Paradine. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $2.

This is a slight but charming novel of a Victorian childhood in an English country rectory. It displays an unusual skill in the delineation of characters who, like most people, are a mass of contradictions; and it is especially effective in dealing with children's minds. The story, like the little girl who tells it, is delicate, well-bred, and only innocently naughty. Miss Paradine does no more than touch upon the starker side of childhood as experienced by some less fortunately placed or less carefully guarded or more violently independent youngsters. But her study of these little denizens of a well-stocked nursery in their relations with each other and with their parents and in their conflicts with new ideas and old taboos is carefully wrought.

Flight into Darkness. By Arthur Schnitzler. Simon and Schuster. $2.

Schnitzler's last novel, or novelette, displays none of the remarkable characteristics associated with his previous plays

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and novels; for this story of a man who is so obsessed with the fear of madness that he makes his brother promise to kill him, and then goes mad and kills the brother, is flat and painfully machine-like. The translation does not in the least improve what seems to be quite evil writing.

Green Memory. By M. Barnard Eldershaw. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

"Green Memory," the result of a collaboration between two Australian women, is compared on the jacket to Jane Austen's work. The resemblance is singularly small, if it exists at all, but the lack of resemblance does not in the least harm the story of an Austrian family thrown out of its accustomed calm, Victorian place by the disgrace and suicide of the father. The book is spotty and formless; phrases sometimes strain too much after effect. None the less, some of the spots are brilliant, particularly the treatment of the child Mina. And the characters actually live their stiffness or weakness or strength throughout the course of the novel.

Higher Command. By Edlef Koppen. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. $2.50.

The only departure this war novel makes from the method of other war novels, particularly those written by Germans, is the inclusion of official documents and pronouncements within the text of the account. The intended effect is probably to show the amazing dissimilarity between the grand macroscopic program of war and the microscopic activities and feelings of one man. Once or twice the effect is gained, but eventually it is lost; for the point has been proved, and the eventual confinement of the hero in a madhouse for refusing to fight any more comes too late to have any effect on a reader long before wearied by endless repetition of horrible details.

Music

A Change in Structure

THE piano sonata of Roy Harris, which Harry Cumpson played at his Town Hall recital on Saturday afternoon, December 19, represents a quite new and original addition to the collection of answers returned by "modernism" to the question: "What's wrong with music, and what shall we do about it?" The significance of music at its best—unique and definite, yet undefinable in language—is unchanging throughout different periods and different styles. It corresponds to what Clive Bell calls "significant form." We cannot say what an organ fugue of Bach, a mass of Palestrina, a symphony of Beethoven, or a nocturne of Debussy means. But beyond and above the distinct differences in all the means they employ, and in the personalities they reflect, we feel the identity of their ultimate aim and of their final significance.

Thus the function of a composer is to reveal the reality he sees, and so to cause in us the same experience of beauty that we have had from other music, though he employs new and different means to bring it to us. The composer is, as Hugo said of genius, "a promontory into infinity." The road to the summit of each promontory is different from any other, but from each summit we glimpse the same reality. While the nature of the means employed to bring us to this point of vantage is a matter of comparative indifference to us, it is and must be of paramount importance to the composer. He must have faith that what he sees is true and real and worth revealing, and must devote all his attention to perfecting a clear and powerful medium of expression, which means—in a period like this, when old formulae have lost their power—a new medium.

This has been one side of the work of leading "modernists" all over the world: Schönberg changing the interval-formation of chords and melodies and experimenting with atonality; Stravinsky working at new rhythms, orchestral colors, polytonal effects; Haba working with quarter-tones; everyone everywhere reshaping our conceptions of consonance and dissonance and the relations between them. Roy Harris, instead of basing his work on novelty in the sensuous materials of the art, focuses his attention on the structure of music. It is not just the vocabulary of music he wants to change; it is the more fundamental questions of the order in which ideas are presented, the kind of development that is given them, and the reasons for both that he feels need reexamination.

For nearly three centuries the cornerstone of musical structure has been tonality; melody and harmony have been grouped around pitch centers, and the structure of the work has been based on the relations between these centers and on their time-proportions. We have become so used to basing our ideas of form on key relationships of this sort that we are inclined to think form is necessarily based upon tonality. But such an assumption ignores the fact that no such logical key relationships are to be found in the masterpieces of the sixteenth century, for example, which are nevertheless not by any means formless.

Roy Harris is trying to work out an idiom in which the structure shall be based on the self-determined growth of the melodic material, not on any superimposed form. In theory, he is attempting to do in music what was done long ago in poetry—to free it from limitations corresponding to rhyme, meter, and conventional forms. He is convinced that the greatness of Bach and Beethoven and Debussy lay in their triumph over the structural limitations which their training and their environment placed upon them. He feels that the composer of the future must free himself of these shackles. His music must be just as cogent and logical and structurally perfect as he can make it. But its form must be determined by its content. It must grow as a plant or an animal grows, along lines dictated by its own inner necessity, not imposed on it from above.

One does not have to agree with Harris about the inevitability of his attitude to realize that it may be a fruitful one. It is true that we are rather fed up on experimentation with musical materials, and that Harris's approach seems in some ways more direct and more fundamental than many others. But fortunately or unfortunately, a composer's music does not stand or fall with his theories. The test of his music in the end will be the same as that of all music: does it give us a clear glimpse of something we should not have seen clearly without it?

It would be less than honest for me not to state that I am inclined, even from a very imperfect knowledge of a very limited amount of his music, to think that it does. It would be less than honest, too, not to admit that the force of Harris's personality, his entirely convincing sincerity, almost fanaticism, and my friendship for him may have something to do with my respect for his music. However that may be, I think there is no doubt that Roy Harris is going straight toward his goal with more than usual earnestness, intelligence, and talent; that he is in the enviable and today unusual position of having more to say than he can possibly get said; that almost unassisted he is acquiring with prodigious speed the technique he needs; that he is one of the most interesting and most promising composers we have, with several major works of importance (I am convinced of the value of the sextet, the string quartet, and the piano sonata) to his credit, and more coming fast.

If the contemplated performances of his quartet and of his Toccata for orchestra materialize this season, those who have any interest in the future of music will have a good deal to think about.

ARTHUR MENDEL

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Cornelia Otis Skinner—Lyceum—W. 45 St.
Counsellor-at-Law—Plymouth—W. 45 St.
Cynara—Morosco—45 St. W. of B'way.
Louder, Please—Masque—45 St. W. of B'way.
Mourning Becomes Electra—Guild—52 St. W. of B'way.
OF Thee I Sing—Music Box—W. 45 St.
Papavert—Vanderbilt—48 St. E. of B'way.
Reunion in Vienna—Martin Beck—45 St. & 8 Ave.
Sing High, Sing Low—Sam H. Harris—42 St. W. of B'way.
Springtime for Henry—Bijou—45 St. W. of B'way.
The Barretts of Wimpole Street—Empire—B'way. & 40 St.
The Band Wagon—New Amsterdam—W. 42 St.
The Bride The Sun Shines On—Fulton—46 St. W. of B'way.
The Cat and The Fiddle—Globe—B'way & 46 St.
The Good Fairy—Henry Miller's—124 W. 43 St.
The House of Connelly—Mansfield—47 St. W. of B'way.
The Passing Present—Ethel Barrymore—47 St. W. of B'way.
The Left Bank—Little—44 St.
The Laugh Parade—Imperial—45 St. W. of B'way.

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Films

"Based on the Play—"

HARDLY a movie has come to town these last weeks which has not been based on a Broadway play or a successful book. "Private Lives" (Capitol), which is based on Noel Coward's successful farce, has been very competently done by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, with Norma Shearer and Robert Montgomery. In the movie version the divorced wife and husband who meet on the Riviera, where they are both spending second honeymoons with second spouses, run away not to Paris but to a chalet in the Swiss Alps. This change is altogether happy, providing exciting scenery as well as some thrilling moments when the two runaways carry on one of their sprightly conversations on the edge of a very real cliff above a very real chasm. There has apparently been no censorship either of the lines or of the hilarious and often very rough action.

Norma Shearer's performance, though at times it would gain by being slightly less eager, shows an excellent sense of comedy. Robert Montgomery starts out by being a trifle slow but he picks up rapidly, and the play takes on the quality of a fast eccentric dance in which the two principals, by turns quarreling violently and loving passionately, whirl to the top of a mountain and back again. They are very ably supported by Reginald Denny and Una Merkel, who finally get caught in the rhythm themselves and quarrel almost as well as the principals.

"Tonight or Never" (Rialto) is also a reproduced play, also a farce, but Gloria Swanson is not capable of giving it the warmth and gaiety it needs. Melvyn Douglas as the supposed gigolo who turns out to be the impresario from the Metropolitan Opera is handsome, passionate, and adroit. But unfortunately, Gloria Swanson as the temperamental prima donna whose voice needs, and gets, the tonic of a love affair is not supple enough for the part. Her acting and her speech, perhaps from too long experience in posing, clothes-wearing Hollywood parts, are a drag on the spirited pace of the play.

"Private Lives" and "Tonight or Never," both being photographed stage plays, have no particular significance as motion pictures, though in "Private Lives" the shifting of the scene to the mountains does employ one of the special gifts of the camera which adds variety and a certain spaciousness to the play. But why is Hollywood, notoriously for and of the people, going in so strongly for sophisticated farce and, in "Arrowsmith," for serious drama that does not even end happily? It is true that the two farces provide a certain amount of slapstick, but the fact remains that smart New York plays have never been considered good box office in the provinces. Anne O'Hare McCormick, writing in the New York *Times* after a very observant visit to Hollywood, remarks that the movies are a business beginning to be worried about art. She also says that Hollywood is now engaged in photographing all the plays and books that have met with any kind of success, while it looks forward with panic to what it considers a lack of material when these sources dry up. Is "Private Lives" to be attributed to the first or the second state of mind? However that may be, it will be a good thing when Hollywood does run through all the ready-made material in the form of plays and books. Then, perhaps, it will discover, of necessity, the wealth rather than the lack of material. For instance, history and mythology, fantasy and horror were "good box office" long before the movies were invented, yet they have been scarcely touched by the camera, which alone can exploit them fully and in a fresh form.

MARGARET MARSHALL

Drama

New Year Suggestions

THE following are the theatrical entertainments now current which seem to me the most worth visiting:

"Mourning Becomes Electra" (Guild Theater). O'Neill's superb play superbly done. The finest drama and the finest performances seen in many years. Nazimova is more striking than ever and Alice Brady at last has a part worthy of her.

"Brief Moment" (Belasco Theater). S. N. Behrman's witty and intelligent play in the finest tradition of high comedy. Francine Larrimore and Robert Douglas give admirable performances; Alexander Woollcott is amusing as Alexander Woollcott.

"Reunion in Vienna" (Martin Beck Theater). Robert Sherwood's naughty and amusing if not particularly weighty farce-comedy about a too consistent psychoanalyst is raised to a very high level by the delightful playing of the Lunts.

"Springtime for Henry" (Bijou Theater). A consistently mad comedy which would be painful if the perfect style of the playing did not make it one of the funniest brainstorms it has ever been my pleasure to see. Leslie Banks and Nigel Bruce seem to have been born for their roles. Helen Chandler and Frieda Inescort give able support.

"Counsellor-at-Law" (Plymouth Theater). Paul Muni in a characteristically shrewd comedy-drama by Elmer Rice. New York types so keenly observed and delineated that they become laughably lifelike.

"The Left Bank" (Little Theater). Mr. Rice again, but this time having his say about the young Americans who find that both art and adultery flourish best in the Latin Quarter. Not so good as "Counsellor-at-Law" but amusing because of similar deft touches of character.

"Cynara" (Morosco Theater). What happened when a steady husband wandered farther afield than he ever intended. Less profound than it pretends to be but well written, well played, and consistently entertaining. Philip Merivale and Adrianne Allen do it full justice. Henry Stephenson is also very effective as a worldly-wise counselor.

"The House of Connelly" (Mansfield Theater). By far the best play of Paul Green, the young South Carolinian who once won the Pulitzer Prize. His picture of a Southern family trying to live on pride and traditions has something of the charm and beauty of Chekhov. Produced by the Group Theater—a junior branch of the Guild—which has now resumed in this, its first success, after the failure of a second offering.

"The Barretts of Wimpole Street" (Empire Theater). Katharine Cornell in a play about the Brownings which is held over from last season but is still very much worth seeing.

"The Good Fairy" (Henry Miller's Theater). Molnar's selfconsciously clever comedy irritates me but it is one of the great hits, and I agree with the general public to the extent of finding Miss Helen Hayes delightful in the role of the quixotically generous usher.

"Sing High, Sing Low" (Sam H. Harris Theater). Amusing burlesque on the opera racket.

"The Laugh Parade" (Imperial Theater). Ed Wynn in the most consistently amusing show he has ever presented. The Perfect Fool is more engagingly foolish than ever before and there is an abundance of talent in his support. Incidentally, Mr. Wynn is one of the very few producers who can put on a "clean" show without being offensive about it.

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